

**DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR
WRITINGS AND SPEECHES**

VOL. 17

PART THREE

**DR. B . R. AMBEDKAR AND HIS
EGALITARIAN REVOLUTION**

PART THREE

SPEECHES

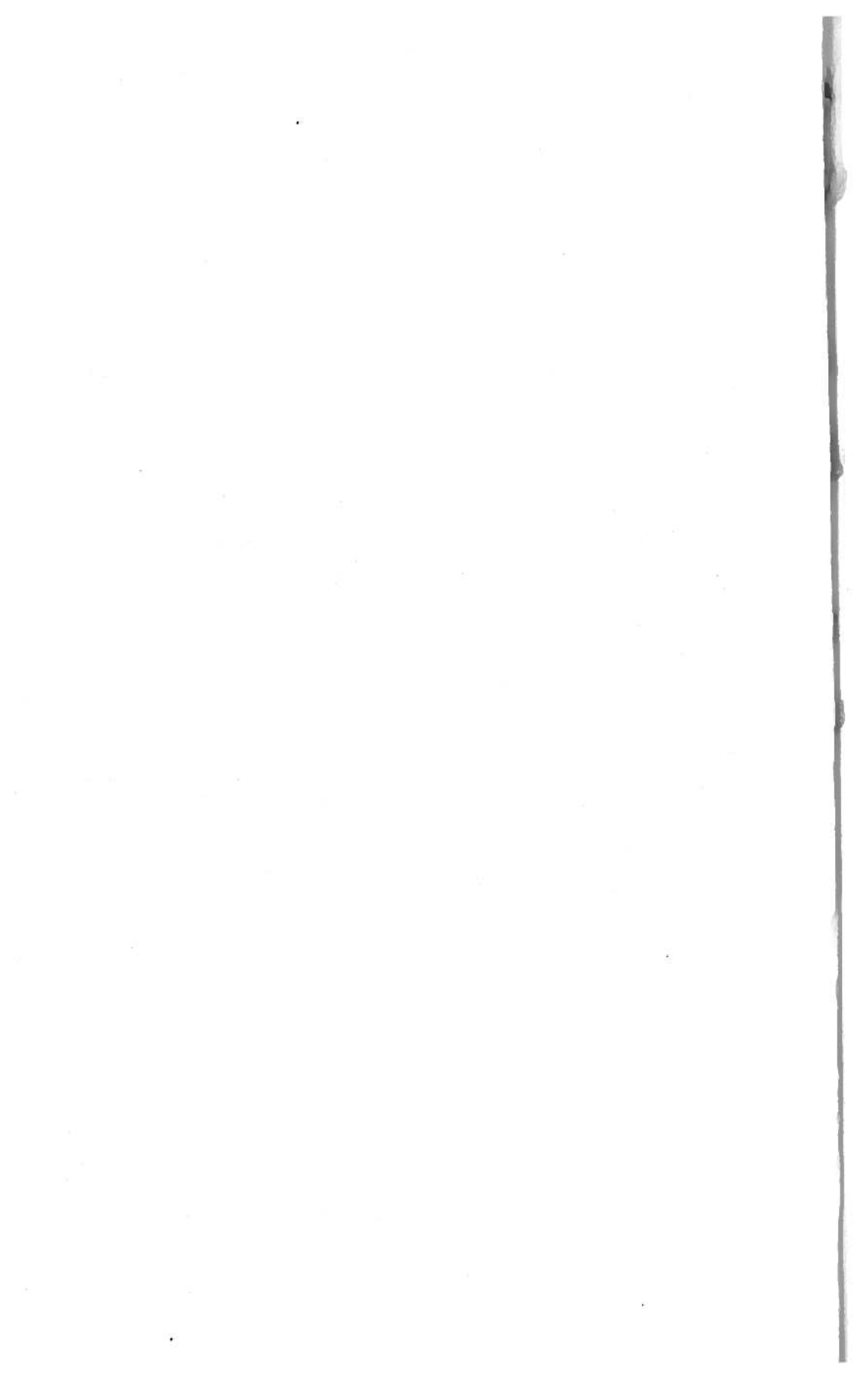


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2003

“Positively, my Social Philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words : Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French-Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master, the Buddha. In his philosophy, liberty and equality had a place ; but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality, and absolute equality left no room for liberty. In His Philosophy, law had a place only as a safeguard against the breaches of liberty and equality ; but He did not believe that law can be a guarantee for breaches of liberty or equality. He gave the highest place to fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty or equality or fraternity which was another name for brotherhood or humanity, which was again another name for religion”.—(P. No. 503)

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.



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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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1954-55

RESEARCH REPORT

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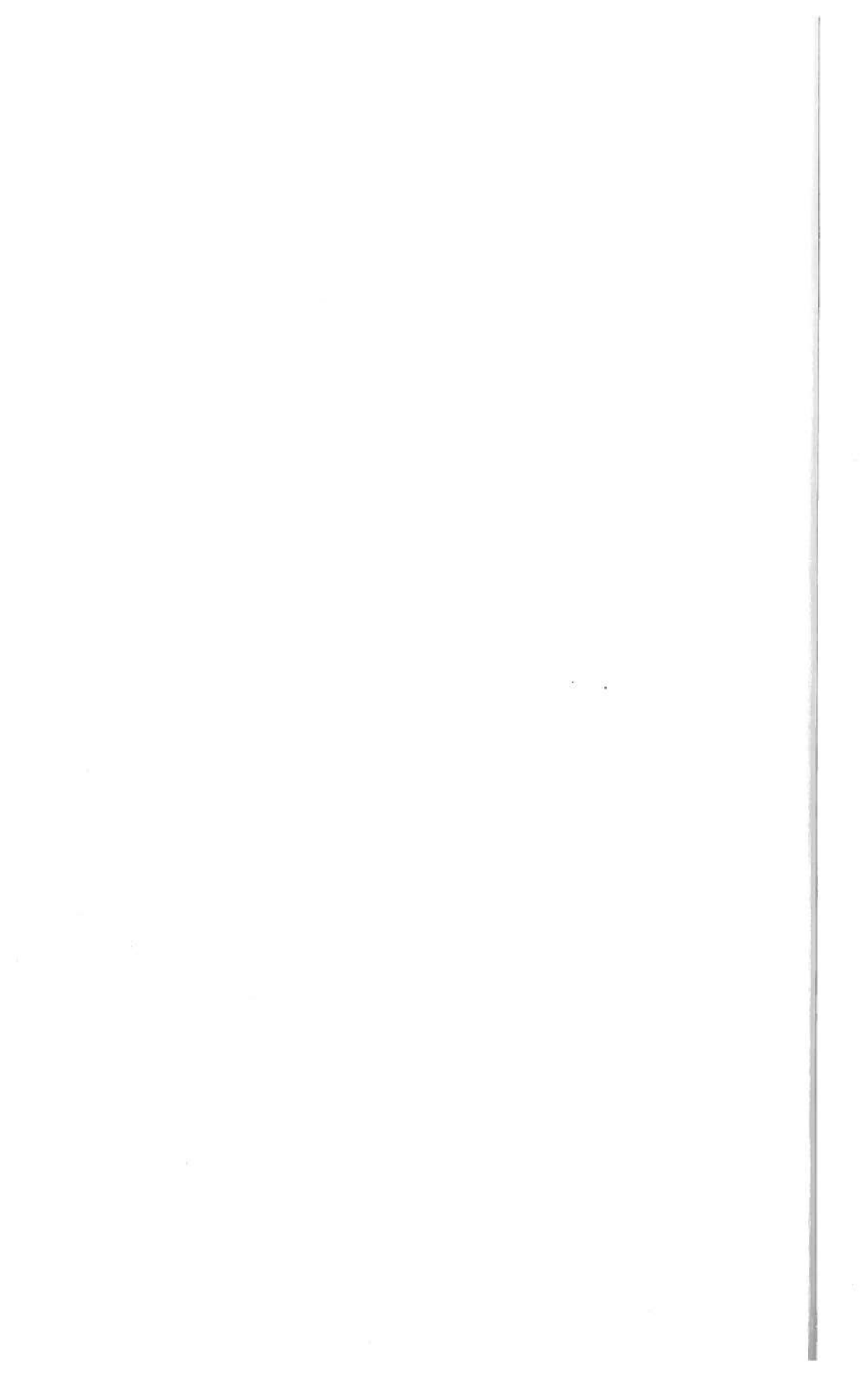
JOHN H. SCHWARTZ

AND



To give education to those who want to keep up the Caste System is not to improve the prospect of Democracy in India but to put our Democracy in India in greater jeopardy.

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar—





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**PART THREE
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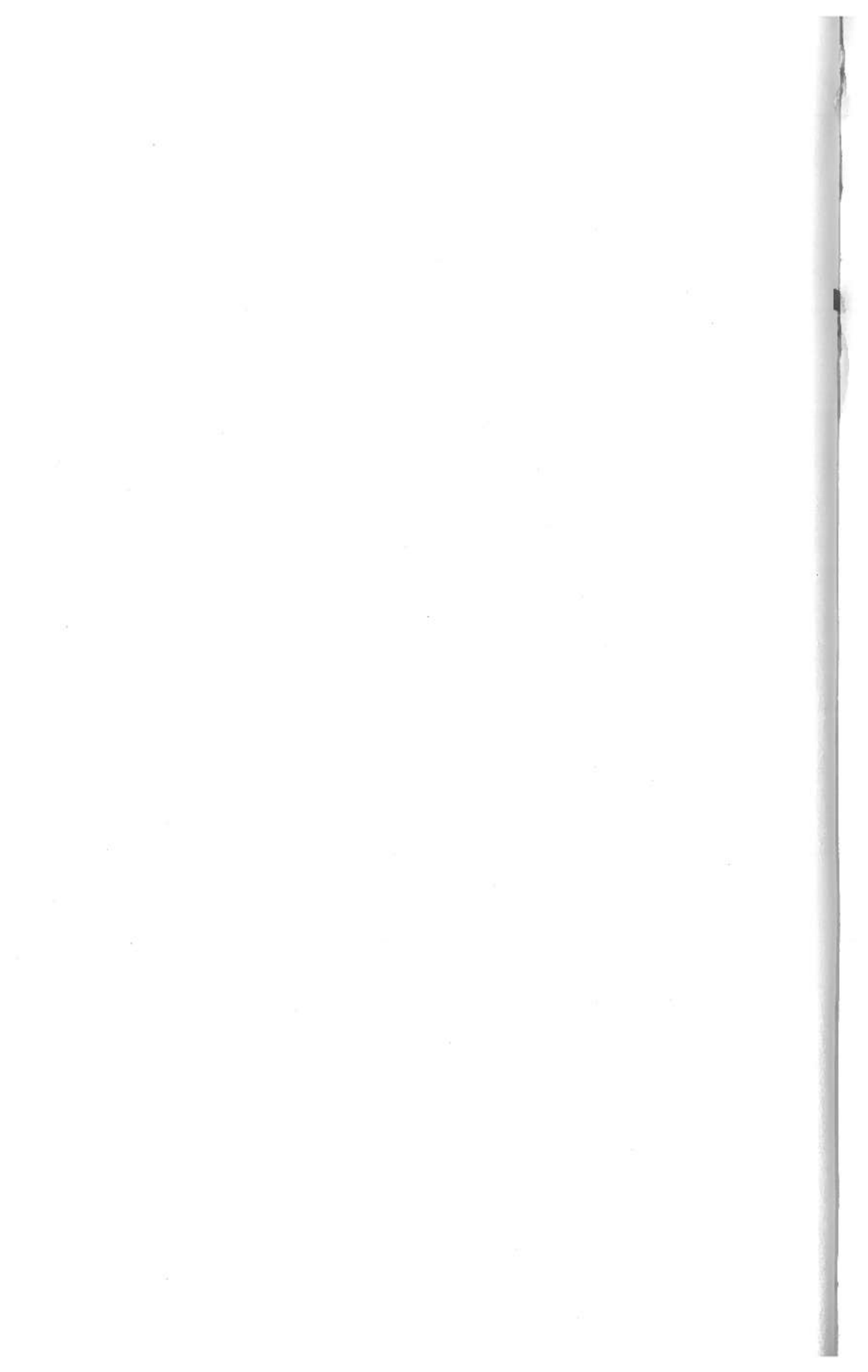
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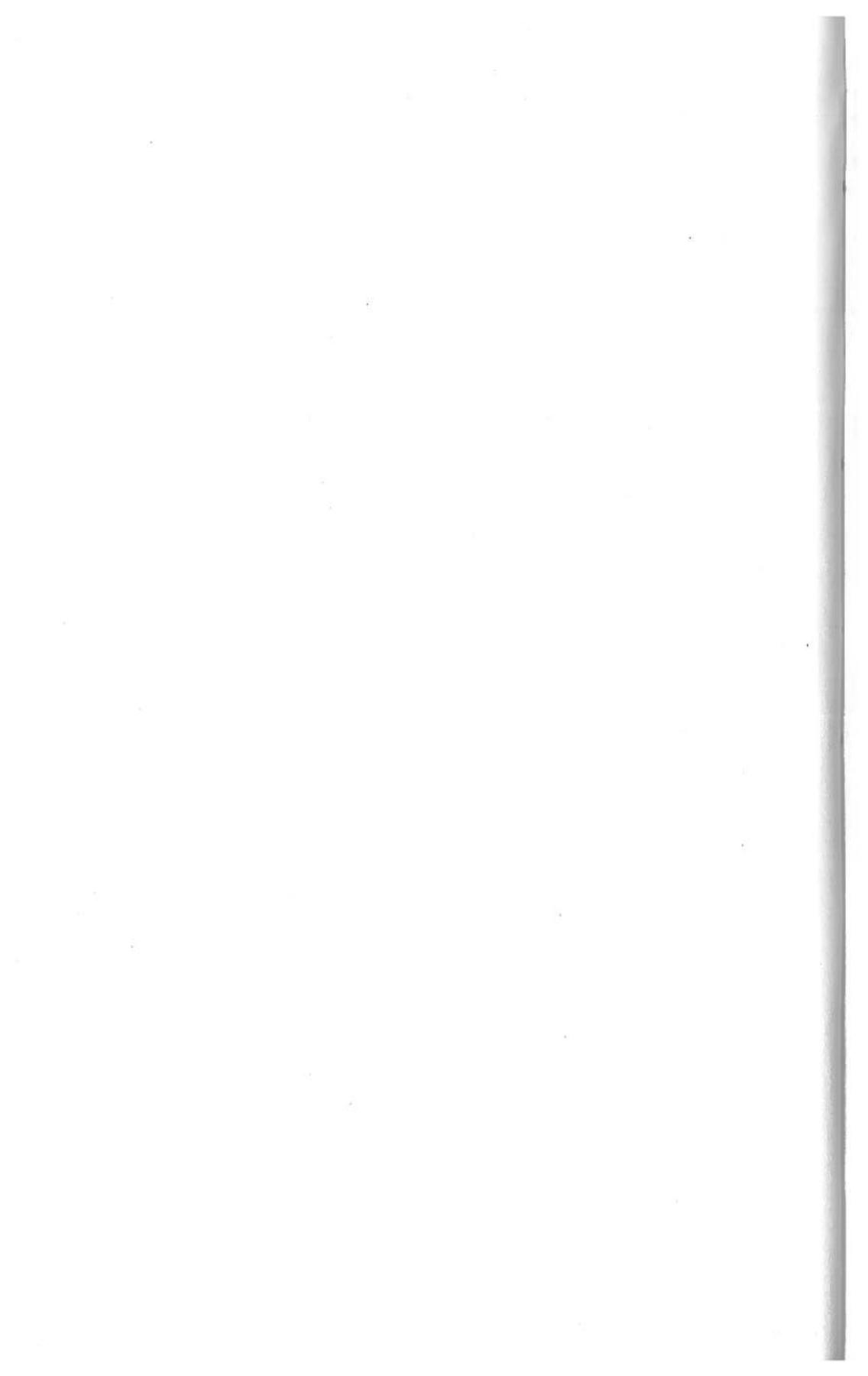
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PART—3

SPEECHES



GREAT FIGHT

“ The new year i. e. 1st January 1927, opened with a meeting at the Koregaon War Memorial held by the Depressed Classes. This year prominent leaders of the Depressed Classes attended the ceremony.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the meeting at the Memorial and told the audience that hundreds of fighters from their community had fought on the side of the Britishers who ungratefully later dubbed them a non-military community. Since the caste Hindus treated them as Untouchables and a despicable lot, they had no means of livelihood, and in the last resort they joined the British forces. In the end, he asked his people to agitate against this policy and compel Government to remove the ban on their military career.”¹

Importance Of The Koregaon War Memorial

However, the entry of Untouchables in the British army in the past (especially Bombay Army) gave Untouchables an opportunity to prove their bravery in so many battlegrounds within and outside the country, that the British Officers showered praise on them.

“ Gen. Malcolm praised the Bombay Officers and Sepoys for their fidelity. Writing to the Secretary of the Board of Directors in 1816, Gen. Malcolm confirmed that the Bombay Army was composed of all classes and all religions like Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Among the Hindus of Maharashtra, the Parwaris (Mahars) were more numerous than the Rajputs and some other higher castes. These Parwaris hailed from the south coast of Bombay. Much praise was showered on the Mahar Sepoys of the Bombay Army who endured the rigours of difficult marches when rations were low and disease was high among men and animals. Whether they were charging ahead or were besieged or

¹: Keer, P. 69.

taken prisoner-of-war, whether they were storming fortresses or making tactical withdrawals, they always stood steadfast by their officers and comrades, never letting down the honour of their Regiments. The crowning glory of the Mahars was achieved on the New Year Day of 1818 on the hot and parched battlefield of Koregaon beside the bank of the rivers Bhima. A small force of 500 men of the 2nd Battalion 1st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry together with 250 men of the Poona Irregular Horse and two six-pounder guns with 24 European gunners of the Madras Artillery, under the command of Capt. F. F. Staunton, fought without rest or respite, food or water, continuously for twelve hours against a large force of 20,000 horses and 8,000 Infantry of Peshwa Baji Rao II who was threatening the British garrisons at Kirkee and Poona.

Capt. Staunton's detachment had been rushed from Sirur on the evening of December 31 to held the Poona garrison. Marching throughout the night, covering a distance of about 27 miles, the detachment had arrived at Koregaon on the morning of 1st January 1818 to witness a frightening array of the famous Maratha Horse. Capt. Staunton had hardly prepared his defences when three detachments of the Peshwa's Infantry, each about 600 strong, had advanced simultaneously from three directions. They were supported by two guns and the advance was covered by a continuous barrage of rockets. In spite of the gallant efforts of the Poona Irregular Horse, the entire British force at Koregaon was encircled by the Maratha Cavalry and Infantry and all accesses to the river were cut off. The assaulting parties came in force and pushed their way into the heart of the village seizing some strong and commanding positions from which it was impossible to dislodge them. There was severe hand-to-hand fighting for each house, hut, and street, and the British were suffering heavy losses. But they would not give up and the Indian Sepoys, many Mahars, held on doggedly, fighting tenaciously and with magnificent courage. Capt. Staunton asked his men to fight to the last man and the last bullet. The Mahars showed tremendous intrepidity and continued to battle with the utmost

bravery against hopeless odds. As the sun set the British found themselves in a desperate situation. The Maratha Army, led by their able general Gokhle, was dominating the British on all sides. Fortunately, the nightfall brought some relief to the British and the attacks of the Maratha forces relaxed in vigour. Then, just one of the unaccountable chances of war changed the course of events. It was difficult to say why the Peshwa's forces ceased firing by 9 o' clock at night and withdrew from Koregaon when victory was within their reach. Twelve men of the Madras Artillery and fifty men of 2/1st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry as also three British Officers were killed in action. One hundred and thirteen men and two British Officers were wounded. Of the men of the 2/1st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry who fell in action, 22 were Mahars or Parwaris (identified by their names ending with "nak"), *16 were Marathas, 8 were Rajputs, two were Muslims, and one or two were probably Indian Jews.

This action of "heroic valour and enduring fortitude" displaying "disciplined intrepidity" and "devoted courage and admirable constancy"¹ won imperishable renown for the Mahar soldier. It has been recorded that "it is hard to say who has the greater glory, the Indian soldiers themselves, or the British Officers, who had been able to ensure and command such faith and such staunch and amazing loyalty"² (Many of the Indian soldiers were Mahars.)

*Names of martyred Mahar : 1 Somnak Kamalnak Naik, 2 Ramnak Yemnak Naik, 3 Godnak Kothanak, 4 Ramnak Yeshak, 5 Bhognak Harnak, 6 Ambanak Kananak, 7 Gannak Balnak, 8 Balnak Kondnak, 9 Rupnak Lakhnak, 10 Wapnak Ramnak, 11 Vitnak Dhamnak, 12 Ragnak Gannak, 13 Wapnak Harnak, 14 Rainak Wannak, 15 Gajnak Dharmanak, 16 Deonak Aannak, 17 Gopalnak Balnak, 18 Harnak Hirnak, 19 Jetnak Dhainak, 20 Gannak Lakhnak

Names of Injured Mahar : 21 Jananak Hirnak, 22 Bhiknak Ratannak, 23 Ratannak Dhannak. (Ref. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's *Bahishkrit Bhartatil Agralekh*, (Marathi) Editor Ratnakar Ganvir, P. 247.)

¹. Brigadier-General Lionell Smith's report to the Resident at Poona, the General Orders of the C-in-C of the Army of the Deccan and the Governor-General of India, and the Despatch of the Court of Directors of the East India Company.

². Maj. J. T. Gorman, *Historical Record of the Second Battalion Fourth Bombay Grenadiers, 1796-1933*.

Soon, the immense importance of the Koregaon action was realized. It was decided to raise an obelisk, 65 feet high, standing on a stone platform about 32 square feet, on the spot onto which the first shot was fired at Koregaon.¹ The foundation-stone of this monument was laid on 26th March 1821. The Column was erected to commemorate the valour of the force. To perpetuate the memory of the brave troops “to whose heroic firmness and devotion it owes the glory of that day” it was decided to inscribe the names of the killed and the wounded on the monument. A special medal was issued in 1851 inscribed “To the Army of India” and two clasps of the medal commemorated “Kirkee” and “Koregaon.”²

The Mahars continued to participate in the operations of the Bombay Army and give proof of their redoubtable courage and undeflecting devotion to duty. They fought gallant battles and won renown for their valour at Kathiawar (1826), Multan and Gujarat (1849), and Kandahar (1880). The Bombay Army took part in the First and the Second Afghan Wars, the Battle of Meeanee (1843), and in the Persian War of 1856-57.³ Soldiers of the Bombay Army went to China (1860), Aden (1865), and Abyssinia (1867), Gen. Sir Charles Napier of Magdala who never forgot the significant contribution that the 25th Bombay Native Infantry made, under his command, to the conquest of Sind was, for ever, praising the Bombay soldier: “I love the Bombay Army most. I never think of its Sepoys without admiration.” The Mahars in the Bombay Army were moving from place to place leaving imprints of their heroism on various battlefields,

¹. Lt.-Col. H. E. Kenyon, “The Battle of Koregaon”, *United Services Institute Journal*, 1931.

². This was the first Indian medal issued by the British for the Armies in India of the East India Company.

³. It was during the Persian War that the first Victoria Cross of the Indian Army was won by Capt. J. A. Wood of the 20th Bombay Native Infantry (120th Rajputana Rifles). Subedar-Major Mohammad Shareef and Sepoy Bheer Bhut, both of the 20th Bombay Native Infantry, were also recommended for the award but it was not given to them as Indian soldiers were not entitled, till October 1911, to receive the Victoria Cross.

far and near. During the Second Afghan War (1878-1895) a Mahar soldier again won high renown for his outstanding bravery which recalled the intrepidity, tenacity, and dauntlessness of the Mahars at Koregaon. Sep. Sonnak Tannak gave proof of gallantry of the highest order, as is recorded on a tablet on the Waudby Road in Bombay. The inscription reads : " This road is named after Major Sidney James Waudby who with Private Elahi Bux and Private Sonnak Tannak, all of the 19th Bombay Infantry, fell on the 16th April 1880, in defence of the Dabrai post in Afghanistan which, when warned that an attack in force was imminent, they refused to abandon and most gallantly held for three hours against three hundred of the enemy, many of whom were slain. Eventually, when all their ammunition was expended they dashed into the midst of their foes and died fighting. In honour of their heroism this tablet is placed by the Regiment. " ¹

While describing the social status of Mahar community under the rule of the Peshwas prior to 1818, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said, " under the rule of the Peshwas in the Maratha country the Untouchable was not allowed to use the public streets if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute the Hindu by his shadow. The Untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or in his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindu from getting themselves polluted by his touch through mistake. In Poona, the capital of the Peshwa, the Untouchable was required to carry, strung from his waist, a broom to sweep away from behind the dust he treaded on lest a Hindu walking on the same should be polluted. In Poona, the Untouchable was required to carry an earthen pot, hung in his neck wherever he went, for holding his spit lest his spit falling on earth should pollute a Hindu who might un-knowingly happen to tread on it." ²

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¹ : Forefront For Ever-The History of the Mahar Regiment, by V. Longer, Pp. 12-15.

² : Writings and Speeches Vol. 1, P. 39.

THE VALUE OF A MAN IS AXIOMATIC, SELF-EVIDENT

“On 18th January 1928, a meeting was convened by the Depressed Classes at Trymbak, near Nasik, which is a place of pilgrimage of the Hindus, to consider a proposal for building a temple in the name of their great saint, Chokhamela. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was specially invited to preside over the meeting. Mr. B. K. Gaikwad, Bhalerao, Punjaji, Navsaji Jadhav etc. addressed the meeting. In addition to these Mr. Datar Shashtri from Nasik, Mr. Marathe editor ‘Swarajya’, and Mr. Vadekar, Mr. Thorat and Mr. Choudhary from Jalgaon also addressed the gathering.”¹

The meeting, after a full discussion, decided that the real memorial of the saint consisted in devoting themselves with unflagging energy rather to the removal of the blot of Untouchability than to the erection of a temple. The fact was that firstly, Dr. Ambedkar was in the innermost recesses of his heart against the idea of separate temples; secondly, the building expenses would have been a financial burdern; and thirdly, Dr. Ambedkar was more of a utilitarian than an idol worshipper.

It was Dr. Ambedkar’s view that the saint-poets of Maharashtra (1300-1600) belonging to *Bhagavat Dharma* did not preach directly against the Caste System which stood for the domination of one caste over others, for social inequality and social injustice. The efforts of these saint-poets were directed to establishing equality, not between a Brahmin as an individual and a *Shudra* as an individual, but between a Brahmin and a *Shudra* devotee of God. In this struggle the saints succeeded, and the Brahmins had to accept the superiority of the devotee irrespective of caste. Lastly Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the meeting as the President. In his address he stated “Yet from the view point of the annihilation of caste,” “the struggle of the saints

¹: Bahishkrit Bharat, dated 3rd February 1928.

did not have any effect on society. The value of man is axiomatic, self-evident ; it does not come to him as the result of the gilding of *Bhakti*. The saints did not struggle to establish this point. On the contrary, their struggle had a very unhealthy effect on the Depressed Classes. It provided the Brahmins with an excuse to silence them by telling that they would be respected if they also attained the status of Chokhamela. " As the followers of different cults of *Bhakti* were themselves filled with caste prejudices, Dr. Ambedkar proceeded, they not only turned a blind eye to their message of equality, justice and humanitarianism, but also described their incredible miracles with utmost exaggeration.

As regards the cult of Ramdas, he said that his followers were notorious for their caste prejudices since its inception, and their founder himself was obsessed with the ideas of Brahmin superiority. According to Ramdas, even a fallen Brahmin was superior to men of other castes in heaven and on earth ; nay, a Brahmin was one to whom even the gods made an obeisance. " 1



¹: Keer, Pp. 109-110.

WE ARE A WARRIOR CLAN

The second session of Ratnagiri District Bahishkrit Parishad under the auspices of Bhartiya Bahishkrit Samaj Sewak Sangh was held on Saturday the 13th April 1929 at 4.30 p. m. at Chiplun under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Deorao Naik, editor "Samata", S. N. Shivatarkar, D. V. Pradhan, S. S. Gupte, B. R. Kadrekar also attended this Conference. About eight thousand men and women assembled for the Conference.¹

"The situation at the time of Conference was tense. "Great efforts had to be made for securing a site for the Conference pandal. Fear lurked in the minds of the Orthodox Hindus that there would be a repetition of the Mahad incident, and the Untouchable Hindus might pollute their wells if the Conference was held in their town. So they closed their wells with great care and caution as if there were an enemy raid. Dr. Ambedkar and his colleagues stayed for two days at the Dak Bungalow in Chiplun.

Men of progressive leanings like Vinayakrao Barve and B. G. Khatu, two local pleaders, attended the Conference. Omswami Ragji welcomed the delegates and stressed the necessity for a broader outlook on the part of the Caste Hindus.

In his Presidential address to the Conference Dr. Ambedkar said, "You must abolish your slavery yourselves. It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self-respect. Self-respect is a most vital factor in life. Without it man is a mere cipher. To live worthily with self-respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition." He then referred to the land system of Konkan called Khoti, which sucked their blood, and promised them to strive his utmost for the abolition of that system. Telling them that he was prepared to go through any

¹: Bahishkrit Bharat, dated 3rd May 1929.

ordeal for their good, he declared. My life was threatened if I came here to wake you up to the causes of your misery and shame. Man is mortal. Every one is to die some day or other. But one must resolve to lay down one's life in enriching the noble ideals of self-respect and in bettering human life. We are not slaves. We are a warrior clan. Nothing is more disgraceful for a brave man than to live a life devoid of self-respect and without love for the country."

"He then suggested that his people should migrate to some better and distant lands, if they wished to be relieved of the oppression at the hands of Caste Hindus and Hindu landlords. He said he would try to secure them land for cultivation in Sind and in the Indore State. He cited the examples of their Muslim neighbours, who went to Africa and returned to Konkan as rich men. The idea of migration to Sind must have occurred to Dr. Ambedkar when he visited Sind to survey, in company with other councillors, the Sukkur barrage which was expected to turn thousands of acres of the desert land into a fertile agricultural region. His new contract with the Maharaja of Indore must have made him hopeful of securing some land for the Untouchables.

At night, Dr. Ambedkar was cordially invited by Vinayakrao Barve to dinner. He attended it saying that one should participate in such an inter-caste dinner not because one attained salvation when one dined in company with the Brahmins, but because such dinners smoothened social intercourse and fostered the principle of equality." ¹

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¹: Keer, Pp. 127-128.

SEND RIGHT TYPE OF MEN TO LEGISLATURES

On 14th April 1929, Ratnagiri District Agriculturists Conference was held at Chiplun. Among the guests from Bombay included Deorao Naik, D. V. Pradhan, B. R. Kadrekar, Shankarrao Gupte, Shankar Wadwalkar, Shivatarkar, Baba Adarekar, Gaikwad, More, etc. prominent from Chiplun were : Shri Vinayakrao Barve, Sathe, Rajadhaksha, Khansaheb Desai, Bendake, Shivaram Jadhao. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presided over the conference.¹

Delivering his address, Dr. Ambedkar told the people that,

“He had now come to believe that the purpose of his life was to struggle for the welfare of the downtrodden. He said that he came of a poor family and had lived among the poor in an Improvement Trust Chawl in Bombay. I know your grievances,” Dr. Ambedkar continued, “the Khoti system is sucking your blood. This system of land tenure must be abolished. Its abolition will bring you peace and progress. In order to achieve your goal you must keep the agitation going on. India is likely to attain full control of its destinies in the coming four or five years. At that time you must take particular care to send to the Legislatures the right type of men as your representatives who would devoutly struggle for the abolition of this Khoti system.”²



¹ : Bahishkrit Bharat, dated 3rd May 1929.

² : Keer, Pp. 128-129.

**PEOPLE CEMENTED BY FEELING OF ONE COUNTRY,
ONE CONSTITUTION AND ONE DESTINY,
TAKE THE RISK OF BEING INDEPENDENT**

As a reaction to the report of Simon Commission there was a need to ascertain and decide the political rights of the Untouchables as a future plan of action. Moreover there was a need to nominate the representatives of the Untouchables for the Round Table Conference to be held at London, in which the general outline of the future Constitution of India was to be framed.

The representation of the Untouchables for safeguarding the political rights of seven crore Untouchables was absolutely necessary while deciding the future of India. For this reason, a national level conference was to be held and it was held at Nagpur. Thus the credit goes to Nagpurians for this historical event.

The local Untouchable leaders especially Dashrath Laxman Patil and Laxmanrao Ogale, M. L. C. went to Mumbai to discuss the issue with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They expressed their desire to hold the all India Depressed Classes Conference at Nagpur under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who consented, told to hold this conference on 8th & 9th August 1930. A reception committee included Mr. T. C. Sakhare as Chairman, Mr. Dashrath Laxman Patil, Bela as Vice Chairman, Mr. Vishramji Sawaithool as Treasurer, Mr. L. K. Ogale, MLC, Amravati, Mr. Hardas L. N., Kamptee, Mr. P. K. Bhatkar, Amravati, Mr. Shamrao G. Rahate, Wadgaon, Mr. H. D. Behade, leader of Matang communitiy, Nagpur, as Secretaries.

Mr. Hardas L. N., Secretary of the Conference, requested Shivram Janba Kamble from Poona to inform the names of invitees and Chairman for the proposed All India Conference to be held at Nagpur.

The letter is as follows :

THE ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS

Office-Vishram Hall,
Lakadganj Cir. 15/10
Nagpur city

Dated the 1st February, 1930.

Reception Committee Chairman—K. G. Nandagawali,
Vice-Chairman—D. L. Patil,
Treasurer—V. S. Sawathool,
Secretaries—L. K. Ogale, MLC, Hardas L. N., P. K. Bhatkar,
H. D. Behade.

To ,
Mr. S. J. Kamble,*
Poona,

Dear Sir,

You are aware of the proposed Round Table Conference is to be held in London next autumn to discuss the future political Constitution of India. I am sure, you will agree that the Depressed Classess must at this critical juncture assert themselves and make it clear to the power that be as to what safeguards and guarantees the future Constitution of India must contain for the protection of their civic right. The discussion of this momentous issue requires the immediate attention of our people. To bring out people from the different Provinces of India together for the purpose of this discussion we have in consultation with Dr. Ambedkar, M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc., Bar-at-Law, MLC, Bombay, thought convening an All India Depressed Classess Congress at Nagpur some time immediately after the publication of the Report of the Simon Commission and have in anticipation of your consent formed a Reception Committee.

* **Shivram Janaba Kamble**—An Untouchable leader from Poona who had a unique distinction of convening the first Conference of Untouchables in India. Prominent leader of pre-Ambedkar era, the editor of a ' Somavanshiya Mitra ' Poona, he sent a memorandum to the British Govt. in 1910, appealing to them to enlighten and elevate the Untouchables.

We shall feel obliged, if you kindly favour us before the 15th February next with your views about the advisability of holding such a Congress and name of the person, whom you would like to preside over it.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Remain,

Yours sincerely,

Hardas L. N.*

Secretary, A. I. D. C.

C. C., Nagpur. ”¹

Reply of Shivram Janba Kamble :

Kamatipura, 5th Street,

Camp Poona.

February, 1930.

“ To ,

The Secretary,

All India Depressed Classes Congress,

Nagpur.

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your printed letter of 1st Feb. 1930 and I am glad to read that you are holding shortly an “ All India Depressed Classes Congress ” at Nagpur.

With regards to the Presidentship of the proposed Congress, I suggest the name of Dr. Ambedkar and also that he should be sent to London as the representative of the Depressed Classes for the Round Table Conference.

* Hardas L. N.—Secretary, All India Depressed Classes Congress, Nagpur.

Admirer and devoted follower of Dr. Ambedkar from Kamptee (Vidarbha), popularly known as Babu Hardas.

¹: Surwade, Vol. 1, Pp. 83-84.

Wishing every success in your endeavours, to uplift the cause of our six crore of fellow brothers, who have been downtrodden by the Caste Hindus for years together.

I remain,
Yours Sincerely,
Shivram J. Kamble. ”¹

Mr. Hardas L. N. Secretary of the Conference issued a Circular about holding the Conference. The Circular is as follows :

“ THE ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS
OFFICE
VISHRAM HALL, NAGPUR CITY

Dated 20th June, 1930.

Circular No. 5

Ref. No.

Dear Sir,

As it was noticed from reports in the papers that the Report of the Simon Commission will be published on the 24th June, we were in a position to fix the date of our Congress and the Provincial Reception Committee in its meeting dated 24-5-1930 had appointed the 12th and 13th of July 1930, giving sufficient time for our leaders to study the Report and come to some definite understanding.

But we are asked by Dr. Ambedkar to reconsider the dates fixed. He says that the first volume of the Simon Report was out on 10th instant, but there is no copy available as yet and he is told that it will not be available till the 22nd. The Second Volume is due on 24th and if similar delay taken place in getting the copies thereof, we are afraid we shall be holding the Congress, if we keep

¹: *Surwade*, P. 84.

to the above dates, either without seeing the Report or without having studied it. Such a situation if it were to materialise will render the Congress futile. We must, therefore, guard against such a contingency and the dates of the Congress ought to be changed.

For this purpose our Reception Committee met on 20th and fixed the 8th and 9th of August 1930 as the dates for our Congress. We may also have time for the Subject Committee to meet and according to the suggestion of Dr. Ambedkar on Reception Committee invite all our leaders to be in Nagpur on the 7th, a day previous to the meeting. No doubt these dates being holidays will suit to our leaders to attend the Session.

It has also been decided by the Provincial Reception Committee from the opinions received that Social, Educational, Youth and Women's Conferences' should also be held along with the Congress and that Rao Sahib Rama Charana, B. A., L. L. B., Advocate, MLC (U. P.) of Lucknow, Rao Sahib V. I. Munishwamy Pillay, F. M. U. M. T. C. (Madras) of Ottacamund, Mr. M. B. Mullick, M. A., B. L., Advocate, MLC (Bengal) of Calcutta and Shreematee Gunabai Gadekar of Poona should be invited to preside over the Conferences in the order they have been mentioned above and I have the pleasure to inform you that they have accepted the offers. Separate Reception Committees have been formed for each of these Conferences and 10th and 11th have been appointed for them.

Depressed Classes all over India are earnestly requested to send their delegates to make the Congress and the Conferences successful. The names of delegates, draft resolutions will be sent to the Secretary of the All India Depressed Classes Congress Office, Vishram Hall, Nagpur City.

Nagpur City
The 20th June, 1930

I remain,
Yours most sincerely,
Hardas L. N.
Secretary. "1

¹: *Surwade*, Pp. 99-100.

The Committee had declared the Various Conferences on this Occasion as Follow :

ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS

WILL BE HELD AT Nagpur City (CENTRAL PROVINCES) In the Orange Market Building On Friday and Saturday, the 8th and 9th August 1930 at 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Under The Presidentship of

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

M. A.; Ph. D., D.Sc. Bar at-Law, M. L. C. of Bombay.

The Reception Committee will meet on 7-8-1930.

THE PROPOSED CONGRESS IS CONVENED

(1) to settle the attitude of the Depressed Classes towards the political movement now going on in India (2) to settle the attitude of the Depressed Classes towards the recommendations of the Simon Commission. (3) to settle the formation of All India Body to voice the Sentiments of the Depressed Classes on all problems arising in the country from time to time.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

President :- T. C. Sakhare, Nagpur. Vice-President :- D. L. Patil, Bela. Treasurer :- B. S. Sawaitul. Nagpur. Secretaries :- L. K. Ogle, M. L.C. Amravati. Hardas L. N. Kamptee. P. K. Vhatkar, Amravoti. S. G. Rahate, Wadgawn. H. D. Behade, Nagpur.

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SOCIAL CONFERENCE

WILL BE HELD

Under the Presidentship of

RAO SAHIB RAMCHARANA, B. A. LL. B.

Advocate. M.L.C. [UP] of Lucknow

On Sunday the 10th August 1930, At 8 A.M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- Kisan Fagu Bandsode Patil, Nagpur,

Secretaries : D. M. Nagrare, Nagpur. S. G. Jadhav,

M. T. Godghate, Nagpur. N. U. Athe, Raipur.

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EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Will be held Under the Presidentship of
Rao Sahib V. I. Munishwamy Pillai
F. M. U. M. L. C. (Madras) of Ottacamund
on Sunday the 10th August 1930, At 2 P. M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- J. G. Sonone, Amrawoti
Secretaries :- C.M. Somkuwar, Nagpur. V. D. Makesar, Yashmal.
R. S. Khandare, Akola.

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YOUTH CONFERENCE

Will be held
Under The Presidentship of
MR. M.B. MULLICK, M. A. B. L.
Advocate, M. L. C. (Bengal) of Calcutta
on Monday the 11th August 1930, At 8 P. M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- R. M. Borkar, Nagpur.
Secretaries :- D. B. Barse, Nagpur. R. S. Mandavdhare, Akola,
G. G. Geaani Anjangaon Bari.

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WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Will be Held Under the Presidentship of Sw. Gunabai Gadekar
of Poona on Monday the 11th August 1930 AT 2 P. M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- Sw. Shevantabai Ogle, Amraoti,
Secretaries :- Tulsabai Bandsode Patil, Jaibai Chawdhary, Nagpur,
Kashibai Mandavdhare, Akola.

**N. B. CHANGES IF ANY IN THE PROGRAMME, WILL BE
PUBLISHED AT THE TIME.**

The arrangement for stay of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was made in the Bungalow of Abdulbhai Khakar, which was near to the Governor's Bungalow. But Dr. B. R. Ambedkar refused to stay there and preferred to stay with other leaders.

The venue of the conference was Vyankatesh theatre.* A large pandal was erected near the Cotton Market for the accommodation of the guests. Along with this Conference, Social, Educational, Youth & Human Conferences were also held. Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj was the president of the Social Conference while Mr. Dashrath Patil was the chairman of the Reception Committee. Mrs. Shewantabai Ogale, Amravati was the chairperson of the reception committee of the women's conference while Mrs. Tulsabai Bansode, Nagpur, Mrs. Jaibai Choudhari, Nagpur, Mrs. Kashibai Mandaodhare, Akola were the secretaries. Adv. Shivdayalsingh from Lucknow presided over the youth Conference and Raghvendraro Borkar was chairman of the Reception Committee.

Importance of this Congress :

'All India Depressed Classes Congress' played a historical role for the political upliftment of Untouchables. Firstly, it was the maiden conference which united all the Untouchable classes from India under a single banner. Secondly, for the first time the Untouchable leaders accepted the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and they submitted their political demands on all-India level jointly. Thirdly, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was elected as the leader of Untouchables unanimously to represent them in the proposed Round Table Conference to be held at London. Fourthly, all-India level organization of the Untouchables was established and lastly, the milestone of the planned political life of the Untouchables was laid.

In short, the first page of out caste India's freedom struggle was written by this Conference of the Untouchables who were deprived of basic human rights for ages. In all, thirteen resolutions were passed unanimously in this Conference.

* Later on, it was known as Shyam Talkies.

" DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS.

The All-India Depressed Classes' Congress which met in its first Session at Nagpur on 8th August 1930 under the presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc., Bar-at-Law, M. L. C. of Bombay, passed the following resolutions :—

1. This Congress unhesitatingly declares that the idea of independence declared by the Indian National Congress is bound to be disastrous and detrimental to the interests of India and therefore dissociates itself from that ideal. In the opinion of this Congress the idea of Dominion Status is best suited to the conditions of India.

Immediate Dominion Status

2. In the matter of the immediate realisation of the goal of Dominion Status, this Congress has no objection for the transfer of Executive Responsibility in all matters except those in which the immediate transfer of control is impracticable for reasons of administrative efficiency, provided the following safeguards for the safety and security of the interests of the Depressed Classes are introduced in the constitution of India :—

(1) Adequate representation in all the Legislatures of the country, Central as well as Provincial ;

(2) Reservation in adequate proportion in the Public Services of the country.

3. Right of appeal to the Secretary of State in cases of neglect in matters of Education, Local Self-Government and other rights and interests of the Depressed Classes, the Secretary of State having the right to certify on the consideration of such appeal any provision in the Budget or in any enactment as he may deem necessary and sufficient and his certificate to be binding upon the Executive in India Provincial or Central.

Inhuman Conduct

4. As the Orthodox Classes have failed to secure the confidence of the Depressed Classes by a real change in their inhuman conduct towards them and as they have not shown readiness to consent to the safeguards for the Depressed Classes in the future constitution of India and as the Depressed Classes believe that no political constitution of India acceptable to all can

be framed without taking due account of the social condition of the country and as the necessary adjustment cannot be made in constitution except by the method of mutual agreement and as the movement of Civil Disobedience is a method of stampede and is incompatible with the means of peaceful negotiations, this Congress cannot approve of the method of Civil Disobedience and advises the Depressed Classes not to participate in it.

R. T. Accepted

5. This Congress accepts the Round Table Conference as the best means of solving the present constitutional problem and advises the Depressed Classes to take part in it. The Congress also takes this opportunity to impress upon the Government the necessity of making the Round Table Conference a complete success as far as it may by inviting to that Conference all parties including the Depressed Classes in their due proportion.

6. This Congress is opposed to the system of representation of the Depressed Classes by nomination in the Legislatures of the country. It demands representation by their own members through election and rejects the recommendations of the Simon Commission in so far as they provide for nomination for representation of the Depressed Classes by the members of other communities and certification by the Governor.

Want Joint Electorates

7. While believing in the efficacy of Separate Electorates this Congress is prepared to accept the principle of Joint Electorates and reserved seats for the representation of the Depressed Classes provided it is accompanied by the system of adult suffrage.

8. This Congress expresses its regret at the undervaluation by the Simon Commission of their claims to representation and the more favoured treatment it has shown to other Minority Communities whose social disabilities are nothing as compared with those under which the Depressed Classes are labouring. This Congress invokes the principle of equality of treatment to all the minorities and demands by way of adequate representation to the Depressed Classes of weightage commensurate with their disabilities in addition to their population quota of representation.

Indirect Representation

9. This Congress accepts the system of indirect election for the representation of the Depressed Classes by members of the Depressed Classes in the Assembly and the Council of State but demands that right of the Depressed Classes to adequate representation therein should be recognised.

10. This Congress regrets to find no provision being made by the Simon Commission for the representation of the Depressed Classes in the Council of State and demands that the right of the Depressed Classes for adequate representation in the Council of State should be recognised.

11. While realising the advantage of the frame-work prepared by the Simon Commission for the reconstruction of the Assembly this Congress is of opinion that it is more appropriate to the Council of State than to the Assembly. In view of this and in view of the great necessity of improving the constitution of the Council of State so as to make it a more democratic body, this Conference is of opinion that the frame-work suggested by the Simon Commission for the Assembly should be applied to the Council of State and the Assembly should be constituted on the basis of direct election.

Simon Report Condemned

12. This Congress does not approve of the proposals of the Simon Commission in respect of the Military in India. This Congress is of opinion that the Army even if it be a reserved subject should not be withdrawn from the Executive Control of the Government of India.

13. This Congress is convinced of the necessity of having one Central All-India organisation for the Depressed Classes of India. In view of this the Congress appoints a Committee :—

(1) To frame a constitution for such an All-India organisation to be submitted at the next Session of the Congress and ;

(2) To function as a Working Committee of the Congress for the next year to deal with all matters relating to the Depressed Classes and arising out of the present political situation in the Country. ”¹

¹: The Bombay Chronicle dated 18th August 1930.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered his Presidential Address
at The All India Depressed Classes Congress,
Nagpur, on August 8, 1930.

He said,

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greatly appreciate the honour you have done me by inviting me to preside over your deliberations to-day, and I am grateful to you for the same. But while I value so much this mark of confidence, I feel the responsibility attaching to the position which you have so kindly called upon me to assume is one of an unusual difficulty, from which it would not have been unwise to have sought an escape. Nevertheless I have consented to assume it because it was borne in upon me that at this juncture it was the duty of every public man to place his services, for what they might be worth, unreservedly at the disposal of his compatriots labouring in the promotion of a common cause. But in taking this responsibility I derive courage from the thought that you will not stint me support and assistance, and that the trusted leaders of our people who are assembled here on this occasion will give us all the benefit of their considered judgment and ripe experience.

I. Problem of Self Government in India.

2. The one question that is looming large in the horizon today is, "Is it possible for the peoples of India to become one united self-governing community?" We have met here to define the attitude of the Depressed Classes with respect to this question which is agitating not only the minds of this country and of the British Empire but also of the whole world as well. Our answer to this question will go a great way in the decision of the final destiny of this country. Our decision will certainly have the potency of retarding or accelerating its realisation and may possibly go so far as to make it or mar it. You cannot therefore, I venture to say, treat this question in a light-hearted manner. You must weigh with deep consideration, its pros and its cons. Let us not fear that our judgment will be different from that of others. But let us be careful that our conclusions will be the result of independent thought and honest belief.

3. You are aware that to this question there are two sides. It has been pointed out that the Indian people are composed of a large number of distinct races; that they profess various religions antagonistic in their creeds and diverse in their rites; that they speak different languages and are separated from each other by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages and by opposing material interests. The question is asked how can a heterogeneous mass of humanity function as a self-governing community ? These are hard facts and no wise man can ignore the bearing which they must necessarily have upon the question of self-government in India. But admitting these hard facts, what is the conclusion to be drawn from them ? Gentlemen, before you proceed to pronounce your opinion let me draw your attention to certain facts equally hard. Consider the position as it obtains in countries like Latvia, Rumania, Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Estonia, and Czechoslovakia. These are new States which have come into being after the close of the great war of 1914 which was fought with the avowed object of establishing the principle of self-government throughout the world. These newly constituted States are all of them self-governing sovereign, independent States, each supreme in its external and internal affair. What are the internal social conditions in these States ? You will be surprised to know that they are as bad as in India, if not worse. In Latvia there are Latts, Russians , Jews and Germans, besides other nationalities. In Lithuania there are Lithuanians, Jews, Poles and Russians in addition to other smaller minorities. In Yugoslavia there are Serbs, Croates, Slovenes, Rumanians, Hungarians, Albanians, and Germans, not to mention other Slave people. In Estonia there are Estonians, Russians, Germans and other small groups. In Czechoslovakia there are Czechs, Germans, Megyars, Ruthinians and others. In Hungary there are Magyars, Germans and Slovaks. Different by race and language these groups form so many warring nations within their respective States. There is not even that religious unity to cement these heterogenous elements into a common whole. You will find amongst them four or five different sorts of Catholics. There are Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Czechoslovak Catholics. Besides Catholics, you have Evangelicals, Jews, Protestants, not

to mention the many small creeds that prevail there. Ponder over this. Is the Indian cosmos more bewildering, more heterogeneous than the human cosmos we find in these countries? I dare say it is not. In making your decision about India you shall have to take cognizance of these facts if your judgment is to be honest, independent judgment. Gentlemen, is there any answer to the question that arises as a result of this comparison that if Latvia, Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Roumania, with all their difference of race, creed, language and culture, can function as united self-governing communities, why cannot India ? I have none to give. And I am looking forward to hear with great interest those of our friends who think they can.

4. It seems to me, to insist that the divergent elements in a country shall be one united whole before it can have the blessings of self-government is sometimes to reverse the order of things and to ignore the unifying effects of the great process of self-government. It is given to very few countries to have within their boundaries a homogeneous people connected by one language, one religion and one culture. But there are many in which, as a result of historical, geographical and political factors, sets of peoples, differing in their creeds, in their languages and in their cultures, have been intermingled. Such people could never have become heirs to a system of self-government which is theirs to-day, if the rule of homogeneity had been applied to them in all its absolutistic rigour. And after all is said and done, has not the system of self-government itself been the cause of unification of many a people who, in its absence, would have remained as discordant and as distinct as they were in their original conditions ? Has not the self-governing constitution adopted by the German Empire been the cause of the unification of the German people ? Could the Bavarians, Prussians, Saxons and the various other groups that prevailed as distinct nationalities and as separate States before 1870 have merged themselves into one united nation if they had not been brought under a common Government ? A common government is often the best instrument one can devise to mould a diverse people into a nation. But why go so far to Germany for illustration.

Does not the case of India itself prove the point ? If India to-day has a feeling of unity and nationhood, however inchoate, the cause of it admittedly is the common Government under which she has been living since the British rule. Historically as well as logically it seems to me not open for any one to urge that the diversity of condition and peoples puts a bar in the way of India's self-government. Indeed, if the ideal is that India should be a united nation, I venture to say, self-government would be the most potent instrument for the realisation of that ideal.

II. Conditions of the Problem.

5. You will no doubt ask, is this diversity of conditions and peoples prevalent in India a matter of no consequence ? Need we not take it into account in framing the constitution for a self-governing India ? I say without hesitation that we must. There is a tendency in the average Congress politician in India to ignore this diversity of conditions and peoples and to insist upon a constitution for a self-governing India free from any limitations or restrictions. Gentlemen, where would be the centre of political power in the constitution of a self-governing India which did not recognise the social conditions of the country ? Do you think it will find its lodgement in the members of the minority communities ? Do you think it probable that the lower classes can become heirs to it ? If I am certain of anything it is of this; that in a self-governing India which did not recognize the hard facts of Indian society the strings of political power will be in the hands of the ambitious members of the upper strata of Indian society drawn from the high-placed, well educated and opulent castes, *i. e.* in the hands of the aristocracy of wealth, education and social standing. In politics as in other walks of life the victory is always to the stronger. The aristocracy will have the resources derived from wealth and education. But this will not be the only advantage in favour of the aristocracy against which members of the minor and weaker communities will have to struggle for their share of political power. There is another which, though subtle in its operation, is yet real. It consists in its social determinism. In this

determinism there is no place for merit or ability. The only thing that counts is kinship which prompts the Indian to discriminate against persons who are not his kindred. The effect of this determinism operating in the minds of the members of the majority community is bound to put members of the smaller communities at a formidable disadvantage and may indeed for ever shut them out from political power. The working out of this social determinism is bound to be most pernicious to the Depressed Classes. As you are aware the gradation of castes in India, founded as it is in theology, forms an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt. The effect of this gradation is to create in the minds of the lower orders a preference for the members of the higher and in the minds of the higher orders a repulsion for the members of the lower. The working of such a psychology is bound to be disastrous to the Depressed Classes in their struggle for political power. Without casting a single vote in favour of the Untouchables, the touchables will be able to make a large draft upon the votes of the Untouchables who will therefore not only lose in the fight but will quite unwillingly help their opponents to win. If the effect of the ignoring of the social facts is to make the aristocracy of wealth, education and social standing the governing caste, I think it is our duty to prevent it by all means consistent with our aim. For, surely we ought not to be content with the mere change of masters. I agree with the Congressman that no country is good enough to rule over another. But I must also take the liberty to tell him pointblank that the proposition does not end there and that it is equally true that no class is good enough to rule over another class. In the competition between the members of the European bureaucracy and the native aristocracy—I am using the word to denote the combined force of wealth, education and superior social standing—as to who can best look after the masses, the aristocracy asserts that as far as knowledge of the conditions of the life of the masses, their habits, their ways of living and thinking, their wants and grievances, and ability to enter into their thoughts and appreciate what is necessary for them, are concerned, it has all these in a far higher degree than the European bureaucracy can lay claim to.

But be that as it may ; it seems to me that the aristocracy cannot escape the charge that its members have in them a class bias, a definite clanishness, a tendency to favour their own kindred, which makes them quite unworthy of being entrusted with power to decide the destiny of the masses. Indeed one might go to the length of saying that due to the great social gap that separates it from the masses and the superior isolation in which it lives, it cannot be said to be charged with the wants, the cravings and the desires of the masses; it may even be said that it is quite inimical to their aspirations. What makes me so emphatic in my assertion that the aristocracy cannot be trusted with political power is because the root notions of democracy on the operation of which alone self-governing India can be safe for the masses run counter to all the ideas which for thousands of years have formed and do form even to-day the common stock of their beliefs. The fundamental principle of the modern democratic state is the recognition of the value of the individual, and the belief that as each individual has but one life, full opportunity should be accorded to each to attain his maximum development in that life. Neither of these propositions be said to form the part of the accepted philosophy of the aristocracy of India. They rather hold that the present life is for each only one of a series of existences, that the position of each individual in this life has been determined for him by his merits or demerits in his previous births, and that therefore no character howsoever high, no ability howsoever great which a man may have to his credit can alter his place in the social strata in which he is born. With the aristocracy the notion that a man born a Brahmin cannot be other than a Brahmin and a man born a Pariah cannot be other than a Pariah, is no idle talk; it is a living and operative faith. To give unrestricted power in the hands of the people of this sort is to arm the hangman with a knife.

6. We, who take this attitude, are mercilessly denounced as communalists and often as the enemies of the country. The Congressman is never tired of reiterating that in every country power always rests in the hands of the intelligentsia and that in the interest of efficient administration it must always be so. Those who will have us leave the coming political power in the hands of the aristocracy seem to think that the social and

the political are two separate compartments of human conduct having no inter-action between them. Gentlemen, you must be on guard against being led away by such a mechanical notion of human conduct. If you will beware of such abstraction you will realize that men cannot be reduced for political purposes any more than for any other, to bare figures, marks to be placed in rows over against one another. A man when he comes to vote-taking that to be the embodiment of politics-does not put off from him, like a suit of old clothes, his outlook, his interests and his opinions and become a naked unit. He carries with him in his voting all that which goes to make his personality and determine his attitude towards life. The talents of the aristocracy are a great asset to the country. But these talents by themselves cannot give it any title to manage the affairs of the country. That title must depend upon its character and the use which it is likely to make of its talents. We must look not to efficiency but to utility before we admit its right to rule over us. For, as Addison has observed, that "There can be no greater injury to human society than that good talents among men should be held honourable to those who are endowed with them without any regard how they are applied. The gifts of nature and the accomplishments of art are valuable but as they are exerted in the interest of virtue or governed by the rules of honour. We ought to abstract our minds from the observation of an excellence in those we converse with, till we have taken some notice or received some good information of the disposition of their minds; otherwise the beauty of their person or the charms of their wit may make us fond of those who our reason and judgment will tell us we ought to abhor." I have already dwelt upon the character of the aristocracy which is clamouring for political power and I need say nothing more. But one cannot pass over certain very shameful things for the continuance of which the aristocracy of this country must be held responsible. In this country there are between 50 and 60 millions of people who are suffering from the curse of Untouchability- a curse and a calamity unknown in any other part of the world. They are denied the elementary rights due to every human being and refused the benefits of civilization and culture. Without equality of

opportunity theirs is the most degraded condition. Besides the Untouchables, there is still in this country an equally huge population of aboriginals and hill tribes who are left to roam about in a nomadic and barbarous state without any attempt to bring them within the pale of civilization and culture. These things bear an eloquent testimony to the spirit of service and the sense of responsibility which the aristocracy has shown in the past. We are asked to believe that the conduct of the aristocracy will be entirely different in the future. I am not sufficiently credulous to accept this. For, I know of no instance of the satans of to-day to have been transformed overnight into angels on the morrow.

7. We are also told that the settlement of the social problem should wait till the political freedom of the country is achieved. A wise man will not fall in with this line of thought. Before one enters into what is called a parlour one must make certain that it is not a trap. Every one of us knows or ought to know that the man in possession is more powerful than the man who is out of possession. Every one of us also knows or ought to know that those in possession of power seldom abdicate in favour of those who are out of it. You cannot therefore hope the effectuation of the settlement of the social problem if you allow power to slip into the hands of those who stand to lose by the settlement unless you are prepared to have another revolution to dethrone those whom you have helped to capture power. Gentlemen, my advice to you is the advice of the great political philosopher Edmund Burke, who said, "Better to be despised for too anxious apprehensions, than ruined by too confident a security." Following that advice I think it would be just and proper for us to insist that the best guarantee for the settlement of social problem is the adjustment of the political machine itself, and not the will of those who are contriving to be left in unfettered control of that machine.

III. Safeguards for the Depressed Classes.

8. It must therefore be made clear that while we do not think that the social factors can be a bar to self-government in India we do not admit that the constitution of a self-governing

India can ignore the necessity of checks and balances to ensure that in the political re-construction the smaller and the weaker communities will not go to the wall. How best to do this, as far as the Depressed Classes are concerned, is therefore the next question that I propose to deal with. There are some students of the political problem of India who admit the necessity of finding some solution of this question and also agree that the same should be embodied in the constitution of a self-governing India. These students in finding their solution have drawn largely upon the constitution of the post-war States to which I have referred in the earlier part of my speech, and it is very natural that they should draw upon that source. For these are the only States in which a close similarity to the existing Indian conditions is to be found. The scheme for the protection of minorities which obtains in these States consists in the enactment of the clauses in the constitution recognising what are called the fundamental rights of the minorities. The Nehru Committee's report adopts this scheme as the best sort of protection for safeguarding the interests of the Depressed Classes. I must sound a note of warning against your being duped by such a scheme. The Indian politician seems to have an inordinate degree of faith in the efficiency of a constitutional law embodying what are called fundamental rights, and is as eager to offer its benefits to the minorities in India as a guarantee against the autocracy of his own class as he was eager to have it in favour of his own class against the encroachments of the bureaucracy. We must however refuse to be satisfied with such a scheme for our protection. While such declarations are not unwelcome it must be pointed out that no declaration of rights howsoever comprehensive in its scope and howsoever clear in its terms and tenor, can insure the enjoyment of those rights. The guarantee of a right consists not in its declaration but in the provision of a remedy for its enforcement in case it is violated. In the constitutions of the post-war States I have mentioned, there is at least the provision that if the minorities feel that their fundamental rights are infringed and violated by the majority in power they can appeal to the League of Nations, which has a Committee appointed for the sole purpose of receiving and passing upon their complaints. Is there any remedy provided

in the Nehru Committee's Report against the infringement of the fundamental rights ? I find none, not even the appeal clause. The guarantee in the Nehru Constitution is therefore quite illusory.

9. Even if there was the appeal clause in the Nehru Constitution I would still advise you not to accept the scheme. A right of appeal to the League of Nations or to the Viceroy or the Government would be a very desirable addition to the armoury of the Depressed Classes. But it cannot be an effective weapon. The best guarantee for the protection of your own interests, consists in having the power of control in your own hands so that you may yourselves be in a position not only to punish when the mischief to your interests is done but to keep a watch over your interests from day to day and prevent possible mischief from arising. This will never be secured by leaving the power in the hands of the third party be it the Governor, Viceroy or the League of Nations. For of what good will that power be to us if those who will hold it in trust for us refuse to exercise it when we call for their intervention ? The safest remedy for the protection of our interests seems to me lies in securing control over the future executive in self-governing India in your own hands and that you can have only by means of adequate representation in the Legislatures of the country. It is by this means and by this means alone that we can keep a day to day watch upon the doings of the executive and thereby ensure our safety and our progress. If you can get other additional safeguards and guarantees, by all means have them. They will add more strings to your bow. But let nothing offered as a substitute for adequate representation be acceptable to you. And you will be perfectly within your rights if you refuse to consent to any change in the political constitution of the country, unless a guarantee in the form of adequate representation is given to you.

10. The phrase adequate representation is on the lips of every minority in India. But owing to the difficulty of defining it in quantitative terms it has, in its vague and indefinite form, become a field for acrimonious contention. But if we wish to give our

demand some specific consent, some quantitative definition of that phrase must be framed. There is prevalent in the Congress-circles a theory according to which adequate representation is tantamount to representation according to population. In my opinion this arithmetical theory of the representation of minorities is a crude and absurd doctrine and forms the best reflex of the prevailing ungenerous attitude of the majority towards the minorities in India. A Minority holds such power as it can derive from its members and its social standing. And it is because that it feels that this much power is insufficient for its protection that it claims an augmentation of it. Without such, an increase in its representation it does not feel strong enough to withstand the force of the majority armed with political power. On this view, the protection of the minority consists in an increment of representation above its population quota. Now if this is true, one may well ask where is the protection of the minority if its representation is confined to its population? To speak of protection to minorities and confine their representation to their numbers seems to me a contradiction in terms. To prescribe that the minorities shall be represented in the legislatures according to their numbers is to make the legislatures do nothing more than be society in miniature and thus reflect the strength of the majority and the minority in the proportion in which they exist in society outside. Such a scheme keeps the balance of power in tact. It keeps the statusquo as it is. From the stand point of the protection of the minority interest, any reform in order to be a real reform, must involve a change in the balance of power in favour of the minorities and this can be secured only by allowing over and above its population ratio some weightage in the allotment of its representation.

11. While all minorities are agreed upon the necessity of weightage in the matter of their representation, there does not seem to be any agreement in the application of it. This is due, it seems to me, to a want of clear understanding regarding the function that weightage is expected to perform. From what I have said above, it will be obvious to you that weightage is a scheme improvised for lengthening the arm of a minority,

which otherwise would be too short for its protection. The length to be added must therefore depend upon the shortness of the arm. If the arm is short the length to be added must increase. If the arm is long, the length to be added will have to be curtailed. To put it differently this weightage cannot be uniform for all the minorities and that it must vary with their social standing; to be high, if the standing of the minority is low and to be low, if the standing of the minority is high. Unfortunately there is a tendency in certain minorities not only to place themselves on a pedestal higher than the common level of the ordinary citizen, but also to monopolize a larger share of representation, not on the ground that their social standing is low; but because their social standing is high. As I have said the idea underlying weightage to a minority is the same as tampering the wind to the shorn lamb and we must therefore guard against such a perversion thereof as I have referred to which cannot but result in injuring the interests of the country and of the other minorities as well.

12. So far I have only given an indication of the right line of approach for the proper application of the principle of weightage to minority representation. The question of determining the exact quantum of weightage still remains. That must vary with circumstances and I cannot do more than suggest a general principle for its computation. It is this. First of all, by a mutual agreement between the majority and minority communities a figure should be arrived at for a maximum increase in the population ratio of representation to be called the weightage factor. In its application to a particular minority for determining its quota of adequate representation the weightage-factor should be made to vary inversely with the social standing of the minority defined as it must be by (1) its social status, (2) its economic strength and (3) its educational position. If this is done, it seems to me, we will have a settlement between the minority communities themselves and between the majority on the one hand and the minorities on the other which will be just and equitable and will leave no cause for complaint to any of the parties concerned.

13. The question that arise next in order for our consideration, pertain to the electorates and the franchise. Gentlemen, what shall be our demand in respect to them? Regarding the formation of the electorates there are two alternatives open to us. One is the scheme of separate electorates and the other is that of joint electorates with reserved seats. I know that the opinion of the depressed classes is divided on this question. There is a large body of the people in favour of separate electorates. They fear that in joint electorates the majority community having a right to vote in the election of our representatives will favour only such men from amongst us as will be subservient to them. I don't say that such fears are altogether without any foundations. But if this is true, then the remedy lies not in enclosing lies in a separate compartment, but in increasing our voting strength to the fullest possible extent by demanding adult suffrage, so that we may thereby be in a position to minimise such influence, as the majority community may happen to cast in the election of our representations. In my opinion, if we can get adult suffrage and here I must say that we must insist upon it as one of our most essential demands, we ought to have no objection to the scheme of joint electorates with reserved seats being applied to the Depressed Classes.

14. In this connection there is one observation which I feel I must make. To say that this is a country which is divided by castes and creeds and that it cannot be one united self-governing community unless adequate safe-guards for the protection of the minorities are made a part of the constitution is a position to which there can be no objection. But the minorities must bear in mind that although we are today "riven by sects and atomised by castes," our ideal is a united India. This is an ideal which no minority which claims to be heard can fail to place in its forefront. That being so, it follows that every minority in formulating the safe-guards it needs, must take care that they will not be incompatible with the realisation of that ideal. By all means insist on your self-guards because the handicap you suffer from is real, but let not your safeguards be such that they will perpetuate the differences which it must be the desire of us all to see bridged. There is undoubtedly an obligation

on the majority to consent to the safe-guards for the minorities. But there rests upon the minorities an obligation of equal sanctity not to insist on such safeguards as will block the way to the unity of all. From this point of view, the scheme of joint electorates and reserved seats must be pronounced to be superior to that of separate electorates. It meets the realities of the present and also helps the ideal of the future.

15. There is another matter which must be of special concern to the Depressed Classes for their safety. That relates to their entry into the public services. The power to administer laws is not less important than the power to make laws. And the spirit of the legislator may easily be violated if not nullified by the machinations of the administrator. This is not only the reason why the Depressed Classes should show special concern for securing power of control over administration. Often times under pressure of work or under difficulties of circumstances law has to leave good deal of discretionary power in the hands of the heads of the administrative department. The welfare of the people must greatly depend upon how impartially this discretionary power is exercised. In a country like India where the public service is almost exclusively manned by people of one community there is a great danger of this vast discretionary power being abused for the aggrandisement of a class. The best antidote against it is to insist on a proper admixture of castes and creeds including the Depressed Classes in the public services of the country. We should demand a certain percentage in the public service to be preserved for the Depressed Classes and there will be no difficulty in guaranteeing this safe-guard to us by a clause in the constitution. Such a protection you could have dispensed with if there was any chance of the Depressed Classes being represented in the future cabinets of the country. But there is not the remotest chance of this in view of the fact that the Depressed Classes will always remain in minority. This makes it all the more necessary why you must insist upon such a guarantee.

IV. Depressed Classes and the Simon Commission.

16. I have drawn your attention to the various safeguards that I think we need must have in the constitution

of self-governing India, I will now turn to the recommendations of the Simon Commission in our behalf. The Simon Commission has no doubt sympathetically considered the case of the Depressed Classes for constitutional safeguards. The Commission has attempted to give a true picture of the conditions of the Depressed Classes, although that picture is by no means complete. They have only referred to the difficulties of the school and the well. They form but a very small part of the long list of the grievances of these unfortunate classes. All the same it must be conceded that the necessity to the Depressed Classes of constitutional safeguards is more truly realized by the Simon Commission than it was by the Montford Report. But I am sorry to say that both as regards the manner of our representation and the strength of our representation the recommendations of the Simon Commission are very disappointing.

17. At present the Depressed Classes, as you are aware, are represented by nomination. Those of us who have had the misfortune of representing you in the councils will tell you of the evil effects of the system of representation by nomination. And I am glad to say that in the evidence given before the Simon Commission by our people all over India, the system was universally condemned. It deprives our people of their liberty to choose their best men to represent them and it leaves our nominated representatives no freedom of action. It is regrettable that the Simon Commission does not discard that vicious system. It still clings to it and recommends that the Governor may nominate representatives of the Depressed Classes if suitable candidates are not available for election. Not only this, the Simon Commission makes a most undesirable proposal by recommending that the Governor may authorise persons who are themselves not members of the Depressed Classes to represent them in the legislatures. These are however reserve measures the consideration of which need not detain us much. But the main proposal of the Simon Commission is in my opinion equally unacceptable. According to it the Depressed Classes are to be represented by election in a system of joint electorates with reserved seats. This, no doubt, would make great advance in our present position if the recommendation had nothing more

in it. But this proposal is conditioned by the proviso that no candidate from the Depressed Classes will be allowed to stand for election unless his fitness is certified by the Governor of the Province. The reason why such a system is unacceptable is because it makes the proposed system of election so much akin to the system of nomination now prevalent that there is nothing to choose between them. And in cases in which the Governor chooses to certify only one candidate in a constituency, the system of election will in practice be nothing else than nomination pure and simple. There is no knowing how the system of certification will work and what will be the elements that will be taken into account in granting it. The Commission suggests that the Governor should certify "after consultations with the Associations of the Depressed Classes or otherwise as he thinks best." In either cases we ought not to consent to it. If the system of consultation with Associations is adopted, it will only result in the multiplication of bogus associations with no other object except that of supporting their pet candidates howsoever unacceptable they might be to the generality of the people. On the other hand if the system adopted is "otherwise," then there can be doubt that it will degenerate into the worst sort of officialdom and will leave the power of certification into the hands of the Mamlatdars and the Tahasildars. For, it is on their reports that the Governor will have to act, if he is to act some intelligent basis. You know what class of Officers these Mamlatdars or Tahasildars are, and the attitude they generally bear to the Depressed Classes and to their intelligentsia. You can therefore well imagine what sort of persons they are likely to recommend for certification.

18. I cannot agree with the Commission that there is any special necessity of certification in the matter of the representation of the Depressed Classes. If the object is to rule out ineffectives from the legislature then I submit that there are many other interests whose representation in the legislatures must be made subject to the process of certification. If ineffectiveness implies want of the knowledge of English and inability to deliver speeches in it, then I know of instances in the Bombay Legislative Council where many of the Non-Brahmin members and a vast majority of the Sind Muslim members are

quite innocent of English. Seldom have they asked a question or made a speech. I dare say that our friends who are representing the Depressed Classes on the various Legislative Councils will be able to recall similar instances in their Provinces. If certification is not necessary in their case I fail to understand why it is necessary in the case of the Depressed Classes only. We must therefore reject the scheme of representation outlined by the Simon Commission and demand the right to elect our own representatives of our own choice untrammelled by any conditions or limitations whatsoever. We are certainly the best judges of our own interests, and we must not allow even the Governor to assume the authority to determine what is good for us.

19. I do not know how you feel about the scheme framed by the Simon Commission for the composition of the Central Legislature. In the present state the form of election to the Council of State as well as to the Legislative Assembly is direct. The Simon Commission recommends that the Council of State should retain its present constitution, but that the Legislative Assembly should be constituted upon the basis of indirect elections by members of the Provincial Legislatures regulated by the system of proportional representation. I am not a supporter of the system of indirect elections and in my minute of dissent which I wrote as a member of the Bombay Provincial Simon Committee, I have condemned it. But the system in the form in which it is clothed by the Simon Commission has its advantages as well as disadvantages. First of all it avoids the problem of joint or separate electorates in the representation of minorities. Secondly, it eliminates the evils of a double franchise, one for the Provincial Councils and another for the Assembly. Thirdly, it makes the Assembly a more manageable body. On the side of the disadvantages it must be mentioned that the system is bound to weaken the tie between the people and their Government and is sure to retard the growth of national unity by concealing the vision of the country as a whole from the gaze of the people. But whether the balance lies on the side of advantages or whether it lies on the side of disadvantages, the scheme of the Simon Commission must find a place

in the constitution of the Central Legislature. The only question is about its proper place, whether it will be more appropriate for the Assembly or the Council of State, it is obvious that it cannot be applied to both. For, it is a great weakness of the system of indirect elections that it exhausts itself in the very first use. It may be depended upon for securing some reality of representation when the elector is only once removed from the voter. But it must lose all its reality if it were worked through the instrumentality of an elector who is twice removed from the voter. That means if their system is applied to the Legislative Assembly there will be no resource left for the construction of the Council of State if it is decided to retain the two chamber system in the Central Legislature. Now the Council of State is the ugliest deformity in the whole structure of the Government of India and it cannot be allowed to remain in the condition in which it is, if it is to discharge in a satisfactory manner the functions of a revising chamber. If I am correct in the view I have taken, then it follows that direct election should be the basis of the Legislative Assembly and indirect elections from Provincial Legislatures with the system of proportional representation would be the most appropriate devise for the constitution of the Council of State. But whatever be basis that may ultimately be adopted for the constitution of the Central Legislature indirect elections must remain the easiest method for the representation of the Depressed Classes in either of them. This is not a result to be deplored. On the contrary as compared with nomination it marks a great advance in our position.

20. In the Provincial Legislatures constituted as at present, the Depressed Classes are very poorly represented. The Southborough Committee in 1919 did a great wrong to them in this respect and even the Government of India recommended an increase in the miserable quota of their representation fixed by that Committee. But the wrong remained unredressed at the time. The Muddiman Committee appointed in 1923 pointed out how very meagre was the representation of the Depressed Classes in the Councils and suggested a large augmentation of the same. But although here and there a member was added nothing substantial was done to remove this grievance. In their weak

condition the Depressed Classes were told to rely upon the official block for support. Experience has taught us that the official block is the friend of nobody, but of itself and that its help and friendship is determined by its own interests. I am sorry to say that during these ten years the official block took far more from the Depressed Classes than it gave to them. Be that as it may, now that this doubtful advantage of the official block is not to be available to the Depressed Classes in the future Constitution of India is it not fair that the Depressed Classes should get the same adequate representation which every other minority is getting ? What is the degree of representation in the Provincial Legislatures that the Simon Commission proposes to allow to the Depressed Classes? They say "the proportion of such reserved seats (for the Depressed Classes) to the total number of seats in all the Indian general constituencies should be three quarter of the proportion of the Depressed Class population to the total population of the electoral area of the province." Now just see the representation given by the Simon Commission to the other minorities in India.

The Mohamedan minority has been allowed to retain the excessive representation which it has received under the Lucknow pact in the teeth of the strongest opposition from the Congress. In the case of the Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans, the Commission has not only given them representation according to their population but has allowed them a considerable weightage over their respective population ratios. Is this not scandalous? Is not a community suffering from severe handicaps entitled to a just if not a generous treatment? Even the Indian Central Committee dealt out justice to the Depressed Classes, and allowed them representation on the basis of their population which if admitted to be the least that is due to every minority.

21. From their inception the doors of the Central Legislature were never open to the Depressed Classes and remained closed to them even when they were reconstituted on a popular basis in 1921. It was not until the year 1926 that the Depressed Classes were favoured with one seat in the Legislative Assembly

of 150 members. The Council of State still remains closed to them. The Simon Commission has attempted to make some provision for the representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature. But its provision covers only the Legislative Assembly and does not reach the Council of States. But thankful as I am for this small mercy I have also to complain niggardly treatment that the Commission has meted out to us. You will remember the great stock taking of the Depressed Classes that took place just about the appointment of the Simon Commission and the attempt made from all quarters including the Government, to show that the Census figure of population for the Depressed Classes was higher than the actual. Even at the lowest computation the Depressed Classes according to the Simon Commission form 20% the total population of the British India. But according to the provision made by the Simon Commission for their representation in the Legislative Assembly, the Depressed Classes are destined to get no more than 8% of the total seats in that body and none in the Council of States.

22. I cannot understand this systematic undervaluation of our claims and our needs by the Simon Commission. Every one of us expected that the Simon Commission would not only be just to the Depressed Classes but it would also be generous. Nor were the reasons for such a generous treatment to the Depressed Classes wanting. I cannot understand how in the formation of a constitution the loyalty of any community can secure for it any privileges. But in so far as loyalty can in India purchase political privileges, the loyalty of the Depressed Classes has been boundless. They have loved the British not merely from principle but from passion. But the strongest plea in support of the claim of the Depressed Classes for a generous treatment lies in their most abject condition. No minority in India stands so down-trodden and yet so helpless as do the Depressed Classes. So many and so singular are their woes that they were deemed to make India unfit for home-rule. Surely a community so much sinned against must in all honesty receive the most generous treatment. The Depressed Classes have not only not received any generosity at the hands of the Simon Commission; but that they have not received even bare justice. One may well ask

what has become of the sentiments expressed by Lord Birkenhead when he moved the resolution in Parliament for the appointment of the Simon Commission. It was then said that the Depressed Classes formed a special trust and that the British people could not hand over that trust without making adequate provision for their safety. Are the Simon Commission's recommendations to be taken as the fulfilment of those magniloquent sentiments? Gentlemen, we must be careful as to how other people are treating us. I am afraid that the British choose to advertise our unfortunate conditions not with the object of removing them but only because such a course serves well as an excuse for retarding the political progress of India. In these circumstances I think it is the duty of our leaders to trouble themselves less about what the Britishers have done for us so far and to care more for what is to happen to us in future and shape our course accordingly without fear from anybody, and insist upon a just if not a generous treatment to which we are entitled by reason of our particular circumstances.

V. Depressed Classes and *Swaraj*.

23. I think I have said all that I need say regarding the guarantees and safeguards that we must have in the future constitution of a self-governing India. That does not exhaust the topics that this meeting has to take into consideration. This meeting will never be said to have fulfilled its purpose if it omitted to formulate its opinion on the present political agitation in the country. You will remember that the Indian National Congress at its meeting held at Calcutta in December 1928 passed a Resolution, which was virtually an ultimatum to the British parliament, demanding the establishment in India of Dominion form of Government by the end of December 1929 failing which it threatened to change the goal of India from Dominion Status to complete Independence. The result of this ultimatum by the Congress was the announcement by the Viceroy that the goal of British policy in India was to give India Dominion Status. This did not satisfy the Congress. It wanted Dominion Status not as a goal but an event to be accomplished immediately and the Congress therefore when it met in December 1929 proceeded

to pass the Resolution declaring Independence as the goal of India. It is for you to declare what view you will take of the political ideal of the Indian National Congress. The demand for independence we may dismiss from our consideration. It is impracticable and in my opinion it will be disastrous in the present state of the country. It is only people cemented by the feeling of one country, one constitution and one destiny who may take the risk of being independent. No one can deny that this country is miles distant from this position. The ideal of Dominion Status seems to me superior for it has in it the substance of Independence without the attendant risks involved in complete Independence. We must therefore refuse to give our support to the ideal of Independence about the utility of which even Congressmen entertain grave doubts.

24. But what shall we say regarding the demand for Dominion Status which is the same thing as *Swaraj* or government of the people, for the people and by the people? As to this you must really think well before you decide. There can be no doubt that the advent of the British in India has been a great boon to the country. Without this providential connection it seems to me very doubtful if the intellectual awakening of India could have been as great or as fast. Without the contact of European Civilization with its basic conceptions of liberty, equality and fraternity Indian Society could never have been driven to feel the sense of shame in respect of the many social customs that have been recognized as part of its social and moral code. It is this live contact between the two civilisations which has by cruel contrast forced upon India the revaluation of its social values and the recognition of many of its social customs as so many social wrongs. This has set India as nothing could have done on the road to regeneration. Without the advent of the British, India could never have had the tremendous advantage of a common system of government and a common system of law. These are instruments of no mean potency for the welfare of any country. But their value to India is inestimable. They have prepared the soil of India for the roots of Indian nationalism to go to the depth they have gone and have also laid down the foundations of a stable Government.

Nor can it be said that they have neglected to provide the country with the best equipment of modern civilization such as currency, roads, canals, railways and the post.

25. All this is true. But the question is at what cost? There is no doubt that a kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the British rule. In the words of the late Mr. Gokhale "We must all the days of our life live in an atmosphere of inferiority, and the tallest of us must bend." No Indian can feel that upward impulse which is the source of elevation witnessed in a self-governing community. You may not appreciate the moral grounds on which the claim to *Swaraj* is made to rest and you may even be amused by it when it is urged by members of the aristocracy as one when one hears satan quoting scriptures in support of his cause. There is no doubt that the cost of the British Government in India is out of all proportion to the means of the people. It is the costliest government in the world. This again may not appeal to you and you may say that no cost is too great for the maintenance of law and order in this country. But there is one thing that I think must appeal to you and that is the poverty of the people. Is there any parallel to the poverty of the Indian people in any part of the world? In the first quarter of the 19th century when British rule in India had become an established fact there were five famines with an estimated loss of 1,000,000 lives. During the second quarter of the century there were two famines with an estimated mortality of 400,000. During the third quarter there were six famines with a recorded loss of life of 5,000,000. And during the last quarter of the century what do we find? Eighteen famines, with an estimated mortality which reaches the awful total of from 15,000,000 to 26,000,000. And this does not include the many more millions (over 6,000,000) in a single year kept alive by government doles. Gentlemen, what must be the cause of this? In plain terms the cause is the deliberate policy pursued by the British in the government of this country. The aim of the British Government all long has been to discourage the growth of trade and industry in this country. This is not an accusation which rests on mere inference. It is an admitted principle of British administration that India be so governed that she will

always remain an open market for British goods. It is this policy which has made India the land of chronic poverty. In this progressive impoverishment of the people who are those that suffer most? I am sure that of the half of the agricultural population which is admitted not to know from one half year's end to another what it is to have a full meal the Depressed Classes must form the largest part. Their abject poverty must make them ready victims of famines to which they must be paying the largest toll. If these are your people, if you are really interested in them you cannot shut your eyes or be indifferent to this heart-rending fact. Gentlemen, you cannot keep on singing the praise of a bureaucracy because it has given improved roads, constructed canals on more scientific principles, effected transportation by rail, contrived to carry letters by penny post and flash messages by lightening, has stabilized currency, regulated weights and measures, corrected the prevalent notions of theology, geography, astronomy and medicine and stopped our internal quarrels. All praise is due to this achievement in the field of law and order. But Gentlemen, we must not forget that people including the Depressed Classes do not live on law and order; what they live on is bread and butter. This inexorable law of life must make even the Depressed Classes demand a government that will help the economic prosperity of the country and thereby effect a betterment in their material life. Some of you may question that the poverty of the people is due to lack of production and may urge that it is due to unequal distribution of wealth. I would be the first to admit that the much talked of "annual tribute" which the people of this country pay to England pales away in magnitude before the heavy exactions by the landlords and capitalists of this country from the paltry and hard-earned wages of the masses who toil for them. But I cannot understand how you can expect the British Government to give relief from the crushing weight of the landlords and the capitalists? One thing we must remember that every Government however powerful suffers as pointed out by Professor Dicey from two very serious limitations. There is first of all an internal limitation which arises from the character, motives and interests of those who are in power and if the British

Government does not sympathize with the living forces operating in Indian society, is inimical to its aspirations, is apathetic to education and disfavours swadeshi, it is not because it cannot favour these things but because it is against its character, motives and interests to do so. The second consideration that limits the authority of every Government is the possibility of external resistance. Does not the Government of India realize the gravity of removing the social evils which are eating into the vitals of Indian society? Does not the Government of India realize that the landlords are squeezing the masses dry? Does not the Government of India realize that the capitalists are not giving the labourers a living wage and decent conditions of work? It does and yet it has not dared to touch any of these evils. Why? Is it because it has no legal powers to remove them? No. The reason why it does not intervene is because it is afraid that its intervention to amend the existing code of social and economic life will give rise to resistance. Of what good is such a government to anybody? Under a government paralysed between two such limitations much that goes to make life good must remain held up. We must have a government in which the men in power will give their undivided allegiance to the best interest of the country. We must have a government in which men in power knowing where obedience will end and resistance will begin will not be afraid to amend the social and economic code of life which the dictates of justice and expediency so urgently call for. This role the British Government will never be able to play. It is only a Government which is of the people, for the people and by the people, in other words, it is only the *Swaraj* Government that will make this possible.

26. Consider the question from your own narrow point of view. Before the British you were in the loathsome condition due to your Untouchability. Has the British Government done anything to remove your Untouchability? Before the British you could not draw water from the village well. Has the British Government secured you the right to the well? Before the British you could not enter the temple. Can you enter now? Before the British you were denied the entry into the Police force. Does the British Government admit you in the force? Before the British

you were not allowed to serve in the military. Is that career now open to you? Gentlemen, to none of these questions you can give an affirmative answer. Those who have held so much power over the country for such a long time must have done some good. But there is certainly no fundamental attention in your position. So far as you are concerned the British Government has accepted the arrangements as it found them and has preserved them faithfully in the manner of the Chinese tailor who, when given an old coat as a pattern, produced with pride an exact replica, rents, patches and all. Your wrongs have remained as open sores and they have not been righted and I say that the British Government actuated with the best of motives and principles will always remain powerless to effect any change so far as your particular grievances are concerned. No body can remove your grievances as well as you can and you cannot remove them unless you get political power in your own hands. No share of this political power can come to you so long as the British Government remains as it is. It is only in a *Swaraj* constitution that you stand any chance of getting the political power into your own hands without which you cannot bring salvation to your people. I know that to the majority of our people *Swaraj* is a weird apparition. It is very natural that it should be so. It recalls to their mind the tyrannies and oppressions and injustices practised upon them by their fellow countrymen and they fear that under *Swaraj* these violations may recur. But, Gentlemen, if you will for one moment forget the past and visualize the *Swaraj* of the future with its wholesome devices to protect masses from Classes you will find that far from being a weird apparition it is going to be a system of government in which you yourselves stand the chance, other things being equal, of being amongst those who will be installed as the political sovereigns of this country. Do not be obsessed by the past. Do not be swayed by fear or favour from any quarters in making your decision. Consult your best interests and I am sure you will accept *Swaraj* as your goal.

27. If you accept this view then you cannot approve of the recommendations of the Simon Commission with regard to the future government of India. I cannot enter into a detailed

examination of the Report of the Commission. Time will not permit me to do that. I will content myself withdrawing your attention to the degree of responsibility that the Commission seeks to introduce in the government of the country. In the Central Government the Commission does not make any fundamental change in the position of the Executive. The Executive there, is to remain as irresponsible as it is. In the Provinces there is an attempt to make the Executive responsible to the Legislature. But this is made subject to the emergency powers of the Governor who by virtue of it may appoint to the Provincial Executive persons who are not responsible to the Provincial Legislature and may take over charge of any department. Gentlemen, I propose to make only one comment upon this scheme of the Simon Commission. It seems to me that there are two ways of approaching the problem. One is how much power to give to the Indian Legislatures, Central and Provincial, over their Executives. The other is how much power the Executive in India, Central or Provincial, must be allowed to retain as against their respective Legislatures. Of the two modes of approach the one adopted by the Simon Commission is the first. It seems to me that when the Legislatures are fully representative of all the interests concerned the right mode of approach is the second and not the first. If I am right then the conclusion is to introduce responsibility in every sphere except where its introduction is not for the present feasible. I know of no reason why the Provincial Executive should not be made fully responsible. Nor does it seem to me difficult to introduce responsibility in the Central Government except in matters pertaining to the Military and Foreign affairs.

28. Some of us may say that Delhi is yet far off and that the Depressed Classes should confine themselves to the question of responsibility in the Provinces. To them I wish to suggest that in formulating their views upon the question of responsibility in the Central or the Provincial Executive they will bear two things in mind. One is that the welfare of the country including that of the Depressed Classes is more intimately and more extensively bound up with the Central Government than it is with the Provincial Government. Therefore to a very

large extent the prosperity of the people of this country will depend upon how well and how easily the Central mill will grind. How well it will grind will depend upon to what extent it will move in sympathy with the Legislature. From this point of view we cannot be indifferent to the question of responsibility in the Central Government if you are anxious to see a rapid advance in the moral and material condition of the people. But there is another consideration which points in the same direction. The Provincial Executive will always remain an important agent of the Central Government in the maintenance of law and order. The two must have their mandates from the same source if they are to work in harmony. Otherwise there will be serious conflict between the two. A Provincial Executive responsible to the Provincial Legislature cannot possibly take its orders from a Central Government which is subject not to the Central Legislature but to the Secretary of State. And in this conflict the administration of the country may be completely paralysed in times of emergency. You cannot therefore introduce responsibility in the Provincial Executive without at the same time introducing some degree of responsibility in the Central Executive whether you like it or not.

VI. Depressed Classes And Civil Disobedience.

29. Gentlemen, even if we support the ideal of Dominion Status with safeguards does it necessarily follow that we must join the Civil Disobedience Movement started in this country by Mahatma Gandhi in March last ? This is a question about which you shall have to make your position plain. The movement is condemned as you are aware by all moderate opinion as being unconstitutional. That argument I must confess does not appeal to me. What would you say if the orthodox classes were to tell you that your temple entry movement is an unconstitutional movement? That instead of direct action your proper method is by petitions to the orthodox classes, suits in Court of Law and attempts to alter the Law ? Would you be satisfied with such limitations upon your resources in your battle for freedom against the orthodoxy ? It seems to me that you can insist upon the use of constitutional means only if there

is an accepted constitution in existence. But where there is no such constitution, few will be inclined to listen to the gospel of constitutional means. Such a view cannot be strange even to the British mind. For after all, was not the Ulster movement a movement of Civil Disobedience? And did not the best of British politicians support and participate in it? The question is not whether the movement of Civil Disobedience is right or wrong. The question is whether it is opportune and consistent with the safety and security of our interests. I am opposed to the Civil Disobedience Movement because I am convinced that it is extremely inopportune. With all the evils inherent in imperialism the British Empire in India does leave some scope for the advancement of the Indian people. I am not alone in holding such a view. It is the view of Mahatma Gandhi who proclaims that treason against the established Government in India is his bounden duty. Not only has that been the spirit of the British Empire but genuine effort was made in 1920 to translate that spirit into a reality by the introduction of responsibility in the Provinces with a view to the progressive realisation of the ideal of self-government in India. Perhaps the reality fell too short of the ideal. Perhaps the realization of the ideal was proceeding at too slow a pace. But can it be said that there was a going back upon that policy? If there was a going back, one could understand the opportuneness of Civil Disobedience. But far from that being the case the goal was defined afresh in unmistakable terms in the Viceregal pronouncement to be that of Dominion Status and a Round Table Conference came to be offered to the Indians to discuss the ways and means of an early realization of that ideal. True enough the announcement has short-comings in it, from the point of view of those who stand for immediate Dominion Status. But that was hardly a reason for the Congress to reject the offer of Round Table Conference. The fight for undertaking and understanding of one sort or another with the Viceroy or the British Cabinet, seems to me a needless if not a useless fight. For undertaking or no undertaking, if the voice of India could be united in making the demand for Dominion Status it should never fail to produce its effect upon the British Parliament. At any rate nothing could

have been lost if the Congress had accepted the Round Table Conference. Its failure would entail nothing but the postponement of Civil Disobedience by a year and would be of positive value to the Congress. For, it must disillusion all and sundry who rightly or wrongly live in-faith. Taking all things into consideration I cannot help saying that the Congress has committed a great blunder in starting the Civil Disobedience Movement at this juncture and in rejecting the method of peaceful negotiations provided by the Round Table Conference.

30. Another reason why I cannot support the Civil Disobedience Movement is this. I do not think it is compatible with the safety and security of our interests. The Civil Disobedience Movement is a movement of mass action. It is a movement the essence of which is coercion. It is a method of stampede and if carried out on a sufficiently large scale it is bound to effect a revolution. A revolution, bloody or bloodless, it makes no difference, is a method of change which is most uncertain in its issue and in which the danger of confusion and disaster in the process is very great. We have before us the famous example of the French Revolution started for the ostensible purpose of establishing democracy resulting in the establishment of autocracy. Revolutions are often inevitable. All the same we must not forget the vast difference that separates a revolution from real social change. A revolution transfers political power from one party to another, just as conquest transfers it from one nation or race to another. I am sure we cannot be satisfied with an empty change of this sort. What we want is a transfer of power accompanied by such a distribution of that power that the result will be a real social change in the relative strength of the forces operating in society. This is a matter which needs adjustment. The future of the Depressed Classes entirely depends upon such adjustments being recognized and implemented. The problem in India is not to make a Government. Nor is it to give freedom. The problem is to form a free Government. And to quote Burke again "To make a Government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of power; teach obedience; and the work is done. To give freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide; it only requires

to let go the rein. But to form a free Government, that is, to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent whole requires much thought and deep reflection". For, it is a matter of nice adjustments which I am sure will not be possible in a stampede of the sort involved in the method of Civil Disobedience.

31. These are the reasons, Gentlemen, why I think that the Depressed Classes should not support the movement of Civil Disobedience. They will do well to avail themselves of the method of peaceful negotiations offered by the Round Table Conference. They should make the most of it by insisting upon adequate representation of the Depressed Classes at the Conference through men in whose ability and integrity they repose full trust.

VII. Organisation of the Depressed Classes.

32. I am warned by many of my friends that this attitude of neutrality is going to cost very dearly to the Depressed Classes; that the Depressed Classes must ally themselves either with the British Government or with the Indian National Congress. I have considered the question over and over again and I feel convinced that the safety of the Depressed Classes lies in being independent of both. As I have stated I cannot oppose Dominion Status for India because I feel convinced that the British Government will never be able to solve our problem. But I cannot understand how by joining the Congress we can be any nearer to its solution. It is said that the Congress does not recognize Untouchability and that it is the only organisation which stands for the masses. Under the auspices of Mahatma Gandhi the Congress has no doubt passed a resolution condemning Untouchability. But what has the Congress done to give effect to it? The Congress in order to carry out its programme had prescribed a Khadder franchise for its membership. Why did not the Congress prescribe the removal of Untouchability as a franchise for its membership? Such a franchise would have been easily workable. A touchable had only to keep in his house an Untouchable either as a servant or as a student to satisfy the requirements of such a franchise. What is the effort made by Mahatma Gandhi to remove Untouchability? Great as has been his moral support he has

contrived to translate very little of it into practice, having regard to his personal influence and his pecuniary resources. Every year he goes on a tour to make collections for his Spinners. Has he ever set out on a crusade against Untouchability? Not one hundredth part of what he spends on the Charakha is spent by him for this cause. You all know how Mahatma Gandhi went on a three weeks' fast to bring about unity between Hindus and Moslems. Has Mahatma Gandhi fasted even for a day to bring about a more charitable feeling between the touchables and the Untouchables? If these things had been done, one could have accepted the Congress platform. But we have not only no evidence of a genuine effort on the part of the Congress to remove the stigma of Untouchability; but we know that Swami Shradhanand had to leave the Congress in disgust because he found the Congress unwilling to do anything more than make a show in the matter. If one were to judge the colour of the Congress by its resolutions one will be slow to accept that the Congress stands for the masses. Its economic resolutions reflect the interests of the higher and the middle classes. Its commercial resolutions concern only the trader and the manufacturer, and the working man is severely left out. A body that stands for 1s.4d ratio and against 1s.6d. must forfeit its claim to be the guardian of the masses. The inclusion of the Salt Tax in the campaign of Civil Disobedience cannot give a different face to the Congress. The fulminations against the Salt Tax are welcome aids to political agitation. But just as the test of the pudding lies in the eating of it so also the true test of the Salt Tax campaign lies in the readiness to shift the burden by a substitute such as will cut the classes and spare the masses. Time alone can show the genuineness behind it. But I have no doubt that when the time for test comes many a Congressman will be in the camp of the classes and not of the masses. That the Congress should be lukewarm and apathetic to the masses is only inevitable. For, it represents a nationalist movement and is not a political party. As such its programme and policy must be a hodge-podge. It must be obvious to every one that when a body is constrained to take account of all and sundry it can take account of some only in name and that in case of conflict

it must leave the weakest to its fate. I do not see therefore how we can expect the Congress to take up our cause and be our partisan when such a course is bound to antagonise it with our opponents without whose support it must cease to subsist.

33. Those of us who are anxious to serve the Congress believe that the Congress will remove our Untouchability after the attainment of *Swaraj* as a reward for our services. If we don't do service to it now we shall be pilloried later on for our default. I need hardly make the comment that gratuitous services are rarely rewarded. But what I am most anxious to point out is that serve the Congress as much as we may, after *Swaraj*, we shall be searching in vain to find the Congress. We shall then have to depend upon our own resources. For, the Congress having accomplished its purpose will have vanished in to thin air with the advent of *Swaraj*. And the "Great Beast" to use the expression of Hamilton with which we will be confronted will be the people of this country with their passions and prejudices in full swing. I am afraid that even Mahatma Gandhi to whom we are asked to leave all our woes for redress will find himself unable to protect us against it, assuming that his span of life will be much longer than is allowed by nature to the ordinary mortals of this land.

34. If I am right in the view I have taken then it follows that we must shape our course for ourselves and by ourselves. I can quite appreciate the nervousness of those of us who fear to take such a course. They smell danger in being independent of both the Government and the Congress. This is a confession of our weakness, and I agree, that for the Depressed Classes to be independent and yet be without the power to make themselves reckoned with is not a happy situation. But what I like to ask is what is the advantage in being dependent either upon the Government or the Congress ? Merely to make yourselves agreeable to any party that happens to be powerful without caring whether you are reckoned with or not is the way of the beggar and amounts to an ignominious surrender which no respectable people ought to tolerate. The question before the Depressed Classes is how they can make themselves into a

force that will be counted by all others, so that their views and their interests will prevail on all occasions. The Depressed Classes movement seems to me to suffer from two grave lacunae. First of all, there is no such thing as a public opinion of the Depressed Classes and secondly, there is no means for a concerted action by the Depressed Classes as a whole. It seems to me that the real reason why our grievances have remained unredressed is because we have remained dumb for ages and have not cared to ventilate them. We cannot with justice blame the Government or the reformers for our condition. We must admit that the voiceless state in which we have chosen to remain imposes its responsibility upon them without giving them a clear guidance or a strong backing. I have been anxiously considering as to why the resolutions that we pass at our meetings, the representations that we make to Government, and the demands that we make on our behalf do not receive the same serious consideration at the hands of the powers that be as they do in the case of other communities. And it has been borne in upon me that we are ineffective because we are still provincial in our actions. The demands made in any one Province do not receive the support and backing of other Provinces when they certainly would if they were put forth by a central organization. I think it is high time that the Depressed Classes be stirred themselves and formed an All-India Organisation which would give voice to their opinions and provide them with the machinery for concerted action. There has come into existence for the last two or three years a body known as the "All-India Depressed Classes Association". It is an open secret that the Association is a body which has only office-bearers but no members. That is certainly the case of its branch in my Province. Such a bogus, make-believe organisation cannot be of any service to the Depressed Classes. You must have an organisation which will be a live institution, which will express the true sentiments of the Depressed Classes and will gather in its fold the true workers of the community with its net-work spread over the whole of the country. It will be a great service, if this meeting were to appoint a small committee to draft the constitution of such an organisation as I have referred to. It is great consideration and it should be made good without delay.

VIII. Uplift of the Depressed Classes.

35. Gentlemen, I have insisted, at more length than perhaps I need have done, upon the necessity of our securing political power. But I must now take this opportunity to emphasize that political power cannot be a panacea for the ills of the Depressed Classes. Their salvation lies in their social elevation. The Depressed Classes must be cleansed of their evil habits. They must be improved of their bad ways of living. By a change in their mode of life they must be made fit for respect and friendship. They must be educated. Mere knowledge of the three "R"s will be quite insufficient for the great heights that many of them must reach in order that the whole community may along with them rise in the general estimation. There is great necessity to disturb their pathetic contentment and to instil into them that divine discontent which is the spring of all self-elevation. And last but by no means least in importance, is the necessity to encourage and energize the Depressed Classes so that they will shed all their fears and begin to exercise their rights of humanity in common with the rest. These results will not follow the advent of political power in our hands. We must recognize that, that is only a means to an end. I am uttering this warning because I wish to avoid the fatal mistake involved in the supposition that because a few from amongst the Depressed Classes will be taking their seats as members of the Legislatures, that thereby the Depressed Classes will cease to be depressed. All this, is the work of social uplift. It must be undertaken by organisations of Depressed Classes modelled on the Servants of India Society of the late Mr. Gokhale or the Servants of the People Society of the late Lala Lajpatrai.

Conclusion.

36. Gentlemen, I regret I have worried you with a speech which I must admit is inordinately long. But I have felt that though brevity should always be the aim, yet on occasions of this sort where people unaccustomed to politics meet for the first time to decide most fateful issues it would be desirable to place before them all sides of the question. My excuse for

this long speech lies in my desire to give you the fullest guidance I can. I hope that this meeting of ours will not be the last and that it will mark the beginning of a great movement which will result in the emancipation of our people and the establishment of such a state of society in this country of ours in which one man will have one value in all domains of life political, social and economic.

I thank you once more, both for the honour and the hearing you have bestowed upon me." ¹



¹ : Printed and Published by the Bharat Bhushan Press, Kamathipura, 3rd Lane, Bombay No. 8.

SECURE CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AND GUARANTEES

“A very largely attended meeting of the members of the Bombay Depressed Classes, both Gujrathis and Maharattas, was held during the week-end* in the Town Hall, Bombay, Dr. P. G. Solanki presiding. The meeting was called to explain the demands formulated at the Congress of the Depressed Classes held at Nagpur recently. The principal speaker was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, president of the Congress.

Dr. Ambedkar dwelt upon the necessity for securing constitutional safeguards and guarantees for the Depressed Classes. He exhorted them to keep aloof from the Civil Disobedience Movement.”¹

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*The date of meeting was not mentioned—Editors.

¹ : The Times of India, dated 2nd September 1930.

AGITATE MUCH MORE, ORGANISE BETTER, THAN AT PRESENT

“The 36th Anniversary of the *Sant Samaj Sangh*, a spiritual association of the Depressed Classes, was celebrated at Poona on Thursday the September 27, 1930 when, in the absence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for a time owing to a previous engagement, Mr. B. G. Jagtap, Principal of the Shivaji Maratha High School, presided.

In addressing the gathering Mr. K. G. Patade, the Secretary of the Depressed Classes Mission Society, Poona, gave a short history of the Sangh, the special feature of which, he pointed out, was the spreading of the gospel of social equality among the Depressed Classes. The *Sant Samaj Sangh* organisation was a moral force for uniting the masses and the Depressed Classes. He paid glowing tributes to the work of Dr. Ambedkar and Subhedar Ghatge and thought that the nomination of the latter to the Bombay Legislative Council on behalf of the Depressed Classes would be for their good.

Dr. Ambedkar, who had arrived by this time and taken the chair, was given an ovation when he rose to address the meeting. In the course of his address he pointed out that his personal activities were not sufficient to bring about the redress of the grievances of the Depressed Classes who, he said, must agitate much more and organise themselves better than they were at present organised. Dr. Ambedkar emphasised that he would do his best to bring home to the British at the Round Table Conference the grievances of the Depressed Classes and secure as many rights for them as possible”¹



¹ : The Times of India, dated 29th September 1930.

**..... OTHERWISE ADVANCED HINDU CASTES
WOULD REMAIN IN POWER AND RULE
THE MINORITIES**

“About ten thousand men and women of the Bombay Depressed Classes assembled on the *maidan* (ground) outside the Damodar Thackersey Hall, Parel, Bombay, on Thursday, 2nd October 1930 evening to wish *bon voyage* to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who is proceeding to England on Saturday to take part in the Round Table Conference as a representative of the Depressed Classes. There was great enthusiasm at the meeting which was presided over by Dr. P. G. Solanki.

The Chairman, at the outset, referred to the services rendered by Dr. Ambedkar to the Depressed Classes in various ways and assured the audience that if there was any man who was best qualified to represent them at the Round Table Conference it was Dr. Ambedkar. He wished him, on their behalf, a pleasant voyage and success in his great mission.

Mr. Shivatarkar then read an address from the people expressing their good wishes to Dr. Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar addressed the meeting at great length. He spoke of the necessity of carrying on propaganda among the Depressed Classes with a view to keeping their interest alive in matters relating to their political and social welfare. He announced that it had been decided by the leaders of the Depressed Classes to revive their old journal under the new name of *Janta* (i.e., the “People,”)

Referring to his forthcoming visit to England, Dr. Ambedkar said that they were being told by the Congress people that it was no use going to the Round Table Conference; he, however, thought something good was sure to come out of the Conference and the Depressed Classes were bound to benefit by it. He could not associate himself with the methods that were being adopted by the Congress people in Bombay, because they had

led to the unemployment of thousands of poor working people without doing any good to the country.

He would at once say that he and the members of the Depressed Classes wanted self-government just as much as the Congress people, but what they said was that they and the other minorities in the country should also have their fair share in the new constitution. If, as the Congress seemed to desire, the British had simply to go away under the new constitution, leaving the system of administration as it was, then the result would be that the advanced Hindu Classes would remain in power and rule the minorities. That was what the Depressed Classes objected to. He declared that if the Round Table Conference failed owing to that attitude of the advanced classes, the blame for such failure would lie on the Congress and the advanced Hindu Classes. He hoped the Hindu delegates, who would attend the Round Table Conference, would bear in mind the claims of the minorities if they wanted to make it a success.

Proceeding Dr. Ambedkar said that he intended to extend his stay in England to carry out another object he had in view. The two main grievances of the Depressed Classes were that they were debarred from serving in the police and the military and his idea was to bring that grievance to the notice of the War Office and the British Cabinet with a view to its being removed. He also intended to go to Russia, Germany, America and Japan, and carry on propaganda on behalf of the Depressed Classes. They knew that the Congress had been carrying on propaganda in those countries against England and he thought that he would be perfectly justified in securing the sympathy of the people of those countries for the Depressed Classes by making them acquainted with the conditions under which they lived in this country.

Mr. Keluskar and Mr. Naik then addressed the meeting.”¹

¹ : The Times of India, dated 3rd October 1930.

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, which were covered by Keer. The dimensions were as under : Editors.

“ Replying to the address, Dr. Ambedkar said what little he had achieved, had been done with the co-operation of his numerous workers and colleagues. He praised the work and sincere help of Dr. Solanki in the Legislative Council, and, styling Deorao Naik his right hand, added that he would guide the movement on proper lines in his absence. He gratefully thanked Shankarrao S. Parsha, who had expended large sums on his movement.

As regards the Round Table Conference, Dr. Ambedkar said it was definitely advantageous from the point of view of the Depressed Classes. “ As regards myself,” continued Dr. Ambedkar, “ I will demand what is rightful for my people, and I will certainly uphold the demand for *Swaraj* ”. In the end he promised, if possible, he would place their problem even before the League of Nations. He concluded his speech with a warning to his lieutenants and his people to keep themselves aloof from internal quarrels ; otherwise the greed for leadership would weaken their strength, worsen their position and mar their goal ” ¹.

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¹ : Keer, P. 145.

POWER AND PRESTIGE WILL COME TO YOU THROUGH STRUGGLE

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, as a representative of Untouchable class, was to attend the second session at Round Table Conference. He was to leave for London on 15th August 1931. On the eve of this occasion a ferewell function was organised at Sir Cawasji Jahangir Hall on 14th August 1931. Dr P. G. Solanki was in the chair. Dr. Ambedkar addressed two separate meetings, one of women at 8 and men at 10 at night.¹

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar made a very stirring speech before the Depressed Class women. He said : "If you stand by your resolve to extirpate your slavery root and branch and undergo all trials and tribulations for it, the credit and success of my being able to discharge the onerous task will be yours."

Immediately he addressed in the same hall another meeting attended by the Depressed Class men. In a moving speech he told his people that their boundless love was a great inspiration to him. As regards the Round Table Conference, he said : "In a Conference of one hundred and twenty-five members we are two; but rest assured that we will move heaven and earth for the sake of your welfare. I had a talk with Gandhi this afternoon. At present he cannot do anything to promote your interests. We must stand on our own feet and fight as best we can for our rights. So carry on your agitation and organize your forces. Power and Prestige will come to you through struggle."²



¹ : Janata, 17th August 1931.

² : Keer, P. 168.

FUTURE GENERATIONS OF HINDUS WILL APPRECIATE MY SERVICES

On the eve of arrival of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar after attending the Round Table Conference arrangements at Ballard Pier, Bombay were ordered by the Government as follows :

“ Arrival of Maulana Shaukat Ali and Dr. Ambedkar by the S. S. “ Mooltan ” on 29th January 1932.

Superintendent, “ H and I ” Dns.

A copy of the Secretary, Bombay Port Trust's letter addressed to the Secretary, Depressed Classes Institute, Bombay, is forwarded herewith for your information. You will see from this what concessions have been given for the Depressed Classes and the Khilafat Committee in connection with the arrival of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Maulana Shaukat Ali at Ballard Pier.

2. Your attention is invited to the Dock Manager's office note dated the 27th Instant, a copy of which has been sent to you direct, and you should make your arrangements accordingly. It has been agreed with the Secretary of the Depressed Classes and the Secretary of the Khilafat Committee that the Green Gate will be opened at 5 a.m. Similar arrangements should be made as were made for the arrival of Mr. Gandhi. The Depressed Classes volunteers should be allowed to line the roadway from the entrance to the hall to the Green Gate. If necessary, the Superintendent should arrange to place volunteers in position so as not in any way to impede ordinary traffic. No one should be allowed on the wharf until the boat has been tied up and the gangway let down and no one should be admitted to the Customs Hall except pass-holders for the ship.

3. There is a possibility of hostile Congress demonstration against the Members of the various Round Table Conference Committees who are also arriving by this boat. Arrangements to meet this situation should be made by the

Superintendent, ' A ' Division. Under no circumstances whatsoever should hostile demonstrators be admitted in the precinct of Ballard Pier.

4. For the purpose of regulating traffic at the Mole, 3 officers will be supplied from T. Division. Motor cars should be parked as usual.

5. It is not unlikely that hostile demonstrators may try to obtain admittance through the Red Gate. Arrangements should be made to see that this point is strongly held.

6. A copy of the pass for the admittance to the hall is sent herewith.

7. It has been arranged that Maulana Shaukat Ali and Dr. Ambedkar will disembark between 7-15 a.m. and 7-30 a.m. and the Secretaries of both Associations have been informed that Ballard Pier must be clear by 8-30 a.m. Between 8-30 a.m. and 9 a.m. the Members of the Franchise Committee will leave Ballard Pier by car for Government House. Government House cars will arrive at Ballard Pier at about 8-30 a.m. They will enter the Docks by the Red Gate.

8. The S. S. " Mooltan " will probably arrive at the Ballard Pier at 4 a.m. It is customary for the Port Trust, when the mail boat arrives early, to open the Green Gate one hour before the arrival of the boat in order to admit mail vans, coolies, post office workers etc. On this occasion this will not be done, and post office workers etc., will proceed to Ballard Pier by the Red Gate. This will probably entail extra duty at the Red Gate and at Ballard Pier before the Green Gate is opened.

Copy to :

Sd/—

Dep. S. B.

Dy. Commissioner of Police, Port." ¹.

¹ : File No. 3447/H/III-32-37.

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar returned to London on Sunday, January 4, 1932. He left London, and embarking at Marseilles, on January 15, 1932 reached Bombay on January 29, 1932. On board were the British Members of the Franchise Committee, appointed by British Premier, of which Dr. Ambedkar was also a Member. As usual Dr. Ambedkar's purchases were with him. They were twenty four boxes of new books.

Dr. Ambedkar was to land at six O'clock in the morning. A huge crowd of his followers and admirers had been awaiting his arrival since early dawn. Some leaders of the Depressed Classes including P. Balu and Kajrolkar, though politically inclined to Gandhi, garlanded and greeted him on the deck.

Dr. Ambedkar and his fellow-passenger, Maulana Shaukat Ali, landed at the Mole station. The Muslim leader and the Depressed Classes leader were received amidst a burst of cheering. Addressing the huge crowds of the Muslims and the Depressed Classes, the Muslim leader said that every man must have an undeviating faith in his cause, and he appreciated the courage shown by Dr. Ambedkar in fighting for his cause. Shaukat Ali and Dr. Ambedkar were then taken out in procession which terminated at Byculla:

To the Depressed Classes Dr. Ambedkar now became a symbol of strength, hope and ambition. It was now proved that he could not be suppressed. He had ably led the Untouchables to the end of an epoch. The dead cells of the Depressed Classes were filled with new energy, new blood and new inspiration. That energy, vision, and consciousness would hold on in spite of difficulties and dangers.

The same evening, at a mass meeting at Parel, Bombay, Dr. Ambedkar was presented with an address on behalf of one hundred and fourteen institutions.”¹

¹ : Keer, P. 193.

Address presented to :

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar,
M. A. Ph.D., D. Sc., Bar-at-Law., M.L.C.
Delegate, Indian, Round Table Conference.

Dear Sir,

We the undermentioned Institutions, feel this an occasion of honour and privilege to accord you, our accredited leader, a hearty welcome on behalf of the Depressed Classes of India on your to these shores offer an arduous fight for the recognition of our legitimate rights and status at the second Round Table Conference, you have indeed proved to the hilt our claim, for equality of status and treatment, and but for the valiant fight you had put on our behalf, we are afraid, our claims would have been ignored. You have done what all is human possible in safeguarding our rights and we are sure, as a result of your endeavours at London, to stand, in the near future on an equal footing with all other major communities in India.

Allow us to take this opportunity of putting on record that the choice of Government would not have fallen on a better head than yours to represent us at the Round Table Conference. Your work coupled with that of Rao Bahadur Shrinivasan, has been of immense value to our cause by many of your powerful speeches in London and elsewhere, you have proved to the world that Depressed Classes are a vast minority and that without, separate representation their interest would never be safe; and the credit goes to you of having proved beyond doubt that many of the so-called Congress leaders, professing sympathy for us are ‘slippery customers.’ It is now for you, Sir, to augment your work at the R. T. C. by continuing to espouse our cause in your own inimitable way in the Franchise Committee which to start work before long. It would be in the fitness of thing to urge upon you not to be content with any thing less than equality of status and treatment for your brethren, and we fully trust that you will do your, utmost for securing these objects in the Franchise Committee as well and in all other work connected with the building up of the constitution for this country.

Oppressed, tyrannized and exploited as we are by one and all from ages long, we do feel that your advent on the horizon of public life was for us a day to be written in Golden ink. The new life and spirit which you enthused in us at Mahad, Nasik and other places to achieve our ordinary human rights have awoke us to our rights and claims and have made us give a burial to our inferiority complex. The sense of responsibility and the present out look of our community which is now out to assert its rights all over the country it will not be an exaggeration to say, is but the fruit of your efforts and guidance, we know the tremendous sacrifice you are making for a community for whom there are but few friends.

It is needless for us to repeat that all our interests, political or otherwise, are safe in your hands and we look to you and to you alone, as our trusted leader, who would lead us and to political power in this country which alone, we are convinced would bring salvation to our oppressed community, we remain,

Your's truly

The Members of

- (1) Social Equality Army (Bombay Presidency)
- (2) Friends Union, Pelisle Road
- (3) Somvanshiya Abalvridha Seva Mandal
- (4) Bahishkrit Seva Mandal
- (5) Maharashtra Balveer Shikshan Prasarak Mandal
- (6) Bahishkrit Hitchintak Seva Mandal
- (7) South Indian Adi-Dravida Mahajan Sabha
- (8) Mahila Mandal Bombay
- (9) Mahar Samaj Seva Sangh
- (10) Satara District Yuvak Sangh
- (11) Nagar District Bahishkrit Seva Sangh
- (12) Yuvak Sangh Samajik Jalsa
- (13) Tramway Company Workshop Depressed Classes Association.
- (14) Navrang Cigarette Company D. Classes
- (15) Bahishkrit Mahila Seva Mandal
- (16) Bara Chawl Seva Sangh

- (17) Ratnagiri District Social Equality League
- (18) Gujrat D. C. Association
- (19) Poona District Bahishkrit Association
- (20) Poona District Dalit Sangh
- (21) Satara District Social Equality Army
- (22) Bahishkrit Depressed Classes CC. Society
- (23) Bahishkrit Depressed Classes Navyuvak Sangh
- (24) Pevalaty Co-operative Mandal
- (25) Dhobitalao Somvanshiya Mandal
- (26) Dhobitalao Somvanshiya Mahila Mandal
- (27) "F" Ward Bahishkrit Seva Mandal Bombay
- (28) Tata Mills Chawls, Mahar Punch
- (29) Kokan Prantik Chamber Parishad
- (30) Foras Road Cement Chawls Punch
- (31) Mazagaon Khadda Punch
- (32) Joona Dhor Chawl Punch
- (33) Batatyachi Chawls Punch
- (34) Foras Road D. C. Tenaments of Block Nos. 1-3
- (35) Navi Dhar Chawl Punch
- (36) Somvanshiya Nirashrit Shikshan Vardhak Samaj
- (37) Solapur District Mahar Seva Sangh
- (38) Satara District Vite Taluka Punch
- (39) Bahishkrit Co-op. Society
- (40) D. C. Tenant of B. D. D. Block No. 7
- (41) Maharashtra Puratan Mahar Unnati Sangh
- (42) Satara District D. C. Society
- (43) Gulabvadi Punch Mandali
- * (44) Bhandara Samaj Sangh
- (45) Bhartiya Tarun Yuvak Sangh Bahishkrit
- (46) Shree Somvanshiya Mandali
- (47) Naigaon Chawl Nawa Saha Kumfor Punch
- (48) Bahishkrit Hitvardhak Samaj
- (49) Pimparee Sayyad Nasik Taluka Jalsa, Kampoo
- (50) Rohidas Dnyandev Samaj

* : It might be 'Bhandari' -Editors.

- (51) Charmakar Maheela Mandal
- (52) Charmakar Sudharak Mandal
- (53) Youngmen's Mahar Association Vinchoor
- (54) Naigaon Social Equality League
- (55) Bahishkrit Bhajan Samaj Vadala
- (56) Chandanvadi Maheela Mandal
- (57) Chandanvadi D. C. Association
- (58) Solapur District Tal. Karmale Hitvardhak Samaj
- (59) Satara District Balveer Sainik Dal
- (60) Thana District D. C. Association
- (61) Bandra Katwadi Varoode Mandal
- (62) Nasik Yuvak Sangh
- (63) Naigaon B. D. D. Block Tenants Association
- (64) B. & C. I. Railway D. C. League
- (65) Nasik District Madhyavarti Mandal
- (66) Bhartiya Samaj Seva Mandal
- (67) Madhyavarti Samata Sainik Dal
- (68) Ravangaon D. C. League
- (69) Atpadee D. C. Society
- (70) Kulaba District D. C. Association
- (71) Tramway Co-operative Society Chawl Tenants Association
- (72) Social Equality League
- (73) Jangira Bahishkrit Praja Chirol Mandal
- (74) Dadar Mahila Mandal
- (75) Navyuvak Mandal Ahmedabad
- (76) Dharwar District D. C. League
- (77) Belgaon District D. C. League
- (78) Karwar District D. C. League
- (79) Meghwal Sudharak Samaj
- (80) Gujarath Dalit Sudharak Mandal
- (81) Satara District Tarun Seva Mandal
- (82) Rohidas Tarun Mandal Thana
- (83) Somvanshiya Sanmargadarshan Sangh, Kalyan
- (84) Thana District Charmakar Aikechhu Mandal Manikpur
- (85) Kamathipura 13 Lane Bhajan Samaj

- (86) The Berar, Asprishya Samaj Sudharak Seva Mandal
Berar
- (87) The Supa Pargana, Kshatriya Yuvak Sangh
- (88) Satara District Vadar Manar Sangh
- (89) B. P. T. Bahishkrit Labourers Navyuvak
- (90) Karnatak Machignar Society
- (91) Karnatak D. C. Youth League
- (92) D. C. Association Hubali
- (93) Chitra Bazar, Bori Chawl D. C. League
- (94) Rohe Taluka Mahar Sangh
- (95) Kamathipura Stable Street Mahar Association
- (96) Agripada Mcpl. Chawl D. C. Tenants Association
- (97) Bandra Chani D. C. League Bhaogra
- (98) Bandra Palee Bahishkrit Samaj
- (99) Mahar Military Indian Officer Association
- (100) Mahim Killa D. C. Association
- (101) Reteecha Dhakka Punch Mandal
- (102) B. I. T. Poibawadi Chawl D. C. League
- (103) Panvel Pensioner Mahar Punch
- (104) Crown Cigarette Co's D. C. Labour Mandal
- (105) Nana Chawk Mahar Sangh
- (106) All India Untouchability League Poona
- (107) Maharashtra Seva Sangh Poona
- (108) Dakshin Maharashtra Satya Prasarak Mandal Kolhapur
- (109) Matang Dnyanodaya Samaj Bombay
- (110) Asprishyonati Mandal Nasik Road
- (111) Temple Entry Satyagraha Mandal Nasik
- (112) Bahishkrit Hitchintak Seva Sangh Nasik Road
- (113) Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Boarding Nasik
- (114) Asprishya Taroon Samata Samaj Chirabazar¹

Impressed with the abiding love and gratitude of his people, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stood embarrassed and motionless for a moment before the vast gathering. After a pause he declared to the vast audience that whatever services he could render were the summation of the co-operation of all the workers and the unflinching backing of his people. He said that no leader was

¹ : Hatole, Pp. 29-33.

by himself responsible for the fulfilment or failure of a mission : so he asked them to continue the struggle. As for his own self, he said, after all, he was a human being and it was human to err. He might have been at times partial, but that should be excused he added.

“I am described as a traitor by Congressmen,” he observed, “because I opposed Gandhi. I am not at all perturbed by this charge. It is baseless, false and malicious. But it was a great shock to the world that Gandhi himself should have sponsored violent opposition to the breaking of your shackles. I am confident that the future generations of Hindus will appreciate my services when they study the history of the Round Table Conference.” He also disclosed how he happened to see Gandhi four or five times in London, how Gandhi went secretly to the Aga Khan with a copy of the Holy Koran in his hand and asked the Muslim leader to withdraw his support to the Depressed Classes, and how the Aga Khan had refused to do so. * Lastly, he appealed to his people not to deify him as he hated deification. At the conclusion of the meeting, he honoured the Nasik heroes who had been by then released from Jails.”¹

“Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in thanking the audience said that he would not have been able to place before the R. T. C. the case of the Depressed Classes had he not been supported by the solidarity of the seven crores of the Untouchables. He referred to the difference of opinion existed between himself and a certain sections of the Depressed Classes and assured them that he did not stand for any particular section of the Depressed Classes but was prepared to accept any scheme safeguarding the interests of the whole community. He criticised the attitude of Mr. Gandhi in dealing with the minorities problem and said that he, while negotiating with the Depressed Classes, was at the same time secretly confabulating with the Mohammedans. He asked the audience not to place reliance on a leader but always depend on their own strength. He finally congratulated the Nasik temple entry *Satyagrahis*.”²



* : The Janata, 30th January 1932.

¹ : Keer, Pp. 193-94.

² : Bombay City S. B., January 30th 1932.

KEEP BEFORE YOUR EYES THE STRUGGLE OF GAUTAM BUDDHA AND RAMANUJA

While on tour as a member of Franchise Committee, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar visited Madras in 1932. "On February 28, Dr. Ambedkar was accorded a colourful reception at Madras by a huge gathering of 10,000 men belonging to the Depressed Classes. Muslims, Christians and Non-Brahmins also participated in the reception. The Chairman of the Depressed Class Army Service presided. Almost all Depressed Class Institutions in the Southern India such as the Depressed Class Army Services Institution, Madras Provincial Depressed Classes Federation, the Presidents of Adi-Dravida Malayalam Sabha, Adi-Andhra Mahasabha, Arundhateya Mahasabha, Kerala Depressed Classes Association and the Labour Union unanimously presented Dr. Ambedkar with an address.

At the meeting Dr. Ambedkar revealed Rajah's somersault from separate electorates to 'joint electorates with reserved seats'. He said that Rajah should not have made any commitment before Kamptee session of the All-India Depressed Classes Congress was held. He, therefore, exhorted the Untouchables to capture political power, to be on their guard against any verbal and rosy promises, and urged them to believe only those leaders who had experience their woes. In the end he asked them to keep before their eyes the fate of the touchable leaders like Gautam Buddha and Ramanuja who had struggled to better their condition and to remove the stain of Untouchability."¹



¹ : Keer, P. 196.

UNTOUCHABLES MUST HAVE POLITICAL POWER

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar decided to hold the second session of the All-India Depressed Classes Congress at Kamptee. Hardas L. N., President Reception Committee issued following circular showing importance of the session.—Editors.

“As you are aware, the second session of the All-India Depressed Classes Congress will be held on the 24th and 25th of April next at Kamptee.

The importance of this session is immense. The session will concern itself with the two following issues :—

1. The Minorities pact presented to the Round Table Conference and to which the representatives of Depressed Classes were a party.
2. The foundation of a new Central Organization to work and speak in the name of the Depressed Classes of India.

The Minorities Pact embodies the political rights of the Depressed Classes under the new constitution. It was not accepted by the representative of the Majority community at the Round Table Conference. The Depressed Classes however had given the Minorities pact their full support. Of late however certain Associations presuming to speak on the name of the Depressed Classes of India have been won-over by the Hindu Maha Sabha and have therefore repudiated the Minorities pact. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that the representatives of the Depressed Classes should meet and apply their best mind to the provision contained in the Minorities Pact and give their considered opinion on the same. The delegates who represented the Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conference—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan—will attend the session and explain the circumstances and the provisions regarding the Minorities Pact.

It is also proposed to invite Rao Bahadur, M. C. Rajah and Mr. G. A. Gavai to attend the session so that they may also have an opportunity of being heard before any resolution regarding the Minorities Pact is passed.

The second purpose for which this session is called, is equally important. There is no necessity to dilate upon it, for as you know what attempts are being made to misrepresent the public opinion of the Depressed Classes in political matters. It is not possible to put a stop to these machination unless a Central Organization is brought into being and made principal organ of the Depressed Classes.

The necessity of holding this session has been emphasized by the tactics adopted by the so-called All-India Depressed Classes Association. It was published in the newspapers that a meeting of the working committee of this Association was held at Delhi on the 21st and 22nd of February last to consider the question of Joint or Separate Electorates and the number of seats proposed for the Depressed Classes under the new constitution and as no decision was arrived at, it was agreed by the Working Committee of this Association that the conference of the leading members of the Depressed Classes should be held at Nagpur to consider the question. It was hoped that a leader's conference would be called before any definite step was taken, but for reasons known to themselves, the All-India Depressed classes Association has abandoned the idea of calling such a conference. Under these circumstances it has been mere necessity to mobilize the public opinion of the Depressed Classes so that not only such tactics may be defeated before they do the mischief they are intended to cause and secondly to allow public opinions of their own on these vital issues.

I, therefore, hope that in view of the importance of this session, you will make it convenient to attend the same.

Yours faithfully,

Hardas L. N.

President, Reception Committee." ¹

¹ : Janata, dated 9th April 1932.

"Dr. B. R. Ambedkar returned from Simla to Bombay on 4th May 1932. Immediately, on 6th May 1932, he left Bombay by Calcutta Mail to attend the All-India Depressed Classes Congress at Kamptee near Nagpur. The Congress had been postponed to this date to suit Dr. Ambedkar's convenience. On his way he was greeted throughout that night by enthusiastic crowds of Untouchables at all the railway stations from Kasara to Nagpur.

The train steamed in at nine in the morning, on 7th May 1932, and Nagpur station echoed with cries of 'Long Live Dr. Ambedkar'. A rousing reception was accorded to Dr. Ambedkar on the platform by a vast crowd of 5,000 people. Tularam Sakhare M. L. C. received Dr. Ambedkar and other leaders on the platform. The City Magistrate and the Police Superintendent were present at the station for the maintenance of peace and order.

The Congress pandal was decorated and was huge enough to accommodate 15,000 persons. The dais was a very big rostrum. As most of the Depressed Class leaders from the four corners of India had gathered to take a vital decision, the atmosphere was charged with tense feeling and excitement. It was very surprising that such a vast gathering of the Depressed Class delegates should assemble despite their poverty. Another significant fact about the Depressed Classes Congress was that it was held at a place which was supposed to be the stronghold of Dr. Moonje, and the supporters of the Rajah-Moonje Pact. In order to have a complete picture of the situation, it may be recalled here that immediately after the announcement of the Rajah-Moonje Pact in one of his letters to Gavai who was the General Secretary of the All-India Depressed Classes Association, Dr. Ambedkar had, under great provocation given him a threat of "breach between us and war amongst ourselves" if his organization advocated the system of joint electorates and reserved seats. It was reported then that Gavai had made a protest to Lord Lothian against this intimidation !

On the evening of 7th May the proceedings of the Congress commenced. About two hundred messages, supporting the demand for separate electorates as adumbrated in the Minorities Pact, repudiating the Rajah-Moonje Pact and wishing this

Congress success, were read out. The General Secretary of the Buddha Mahasabha sent a message of good wishes and asked the Depressed Classes to embrace Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar's Party was then well organized and it maintained rigid discipline. Poor Rajbhoj and his supporters had no such organised backing.

Hardas L. N., the Chairman, then traced the history of the Depressed Classes Congress and, emphasizing the need for unity among the Depressed Classes, remarked : "With separate electorate we will swim or sink." In a two-hour address Muniswami Pillay, defining the aspirations of the Depressed Classes, expressed dissatisfaction at the conduct of the Government, especially for not taking a sufficient number of delegates and asked Government to invite at least two more delegates from the Depressed Classes.

The next day the open session commenced. The Depressed Classes Congress adopted twelve resolutions. It declared that its considered opinion was that the Minorities Pact contained the irreducible minimum demands of the Depressed Classes. It repudiated the Rajah-Moonje Pact as, according to its delegates, it was detrimental to the interests of the Depressed Classes; and it appreciated the magnificent services of Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan they had rendered at the Round Table Conference." ¹

While addressing the Conference Dr. Ambedkar said,

"It is very necessary that the political reins should come in the hands of Untouchables. For that, all of us should unite and secure a political status. Untouchability in India will not be eradicated so long as the Untouchables do not control the political strings." ²

"The Congress of the Depressed Classes thus concluded by declaring that it stood by Dr. Ambedkar and the Minorities Pact." ³

¹ : Keer, Pp. 199-200.

² : Janata, dated 14th May 1932.

³ : Keer, P. 200.

I WOULD NOT BUDGE AN INCH FROM MY RIGHTEOUS CAUSE

“Poona, April 28, 1932.

At the invitation of the All-India Anti-Untouchability League, with its headquarters at Poona, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the representative of the Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conference, at present serving on the Franchise Committee, will come to Poona early in May to accept an address in appreciation of his work, from the League.

At the same time he will be presented with an address from the Depressed Classes of the Poona District.

A local reception committee under the Chairmanship of Subhedar R. S. Ghatge, has the preparations in hand”.¹

“After the Kamptee Congress, Dr. Ambedkar visited Poona, Sholapur and Nipani, where he addressed meetings of the Depressed Classes. Of these visits, the visit to Poona was very important. He reached Poona in the evening of May 21, 1932. There he was taken out in procession. The huge procession went on raising anti-orthodox slogans and reached the open space at the Ahalyashram. There he was given an address of welcome* under the presidentship of A. B. Latthe. Latthe revealed to the audience how in London British statesmen and high officials secretly inquired of him whether or not Dr. Ambedkar belonged to the Revolutionary Party of India. Latthe added that it was quite disgraceful on the part of the so-called nationalist press to depict a great man like Dr. Ambedkar as a traitor. Latthe, who, it is said, had once offered Dr. Ambedkar the principalship of the Arts College at Kolhapur, recalled an occasion when he had asked Dr. Ambedkar about his success as a lawyer. He told the audience that Dr. Ambedkar's reply was that according to him success in life meant success in raising the Depressed Classes to the status of human beings. Latthe concluded by declaring that since

¹ : The Times of India, dated 30th April 1932.

*The address was presented by ‘The Pune District-Depressed Class’ in Marathi language, on which names of 322 men and 42 women were printed—Editors.

Dr. Ambedkar was striving for the amelioration of the downtrodden humanity in India, his services to India were in themselves a great contribution to India and to the world as well.*

Replying to the address, Dr. Ambedkar said :

“ At present I am the most hated man in Hindu India. I am represented as a traitor, I am denounced as an enemy of the Hindus, I am cursed as a destroyer of Hinduism, and branded as the greatest enemy of the country. But believe me when I say that, when after some days the dust settles down and a review of the proceedings of the Round Table Conference is dispassionately taken by future historians, the future generations of the Hindus will acclaim my services to the nation. If they do not recognise, well I would not care for their disapprobation. My great satisfaction,” he concluded with a serene face, “ is that the Depressed Classes have implicit faith in my work and undivided devotion to the mission for which I stand. It is my solemn vow to die in the service and cause of those down-trodden people among whom I was born, I was brought up and I am living. I would not budge an inch from my righteous cause, or care for the violent and disparaging criticism by my detractors.”¹

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar which were reported by the Bombay Chronicle. The dimensions were as under :—Editors.

Replying Dr. Ambedkar said that he did not want temples, or wells or intercaste dinners but Government service, food, clothing, education and other opportunities.

Besides caste systems, there were other distinctions, such as “ *Guna Bheda* ” for education which political reforms needed. He for this reason changed his opinion and was now convinced that political reform should precede social reform.

He also stressed the necessity of the community, having Separate Electorates for the time being even though leaders like Rao Bahadur Raja and Gavai now advocated the Joint Electorates.”²

* Janata, dated 25th June 1932.

¹ : Keer, Pp. 201-202.

² : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 23rd May 1932.

POLITICAL REFORM MUST PRECEDE SOCIAL REFORM

“Depressed Classes from various parts of Southern Division presented a joint address to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at Belgaum on May 24, 1932.* Dewan Bahadur Latthe, who presided introduced the guest as a strong nationalist at heart. The address eulogised the services of Dr. Ambedkar to the cause of the Depressed Classes. The address and a purse of Rs. 500 were then presented to Dr. Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar, in his reply, said political reform must precede social reform and without political power to the Depressed Classes their status would not improve. Though his striving for the good of Depressed Classes alone might be considered selfish, it could be justified in view of the great injustice done to them by the nation hitherto.

Dr. Ambedkar left for Sholapur last night.”¹

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* : The programme was held at Nipani, District Belgaum on 23rd May 1932 as per Janata 25th June 1932.

¹ : The Times of India dated 26th May 1932.

CARE MORE FOR MATERIAL GOOD THAN FOR SPIRITUAL FOOD

After Poona Pact all the Untouchables were eagerly waiting for an opportunity to listen to Dr. Ambedkar. In such a situation the youths of Worli, Bombay had organised a public meeting. The meeting was held on Wednesday, 28th September, 1932 at the open ground of B. D. D. Chawls, Worli. Mr. Deorao Naik presided over the meeting.¹

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who had vigorously launched a movement in his own way at Nasik for temple entry, now swiftly changed the rudder of the ship of his movement. He urged his people to devote their energies to gaining political power. Addressing this meeting Dr. Ambedkar said :

“The object of the temple entry movement is good. But you should care more for your material good than for spiritual food. You do not get food to eat, clothes to wear, opportunities of educating your children, and medical help for want of money. You should, therefore, be watchful of the political gains, and you must develop your strength and struggle for gaining material advancement in life.” It was at this meeting that he made a fervent appeal for a building fund to erect a central building to house the headquarters of the movement.”²



¹ : Janata, dated 8th October 1932.

² : Keer, Pp. 217-218.

ACT AND UTILISE THE POWER COMING INTO YOUR HANDS

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed a meeting on Sunday, 9th October 1932 at 10-30 p.m. on the ground of Improvement Trust Chawl on Belasis Road, Bombay. Mr. Bapusaheb Sahastrabuddhe, one of the main worker of Social Service League presided over the meeting. Shri S. N. Shivatarkar was also present.¹

Dr. Ambedkar in his speech vividly described to his people how hard they had made their struggle for existence by hankering after ideas about the unseen happiness in the other world rather than concentrating their minds on the material forces in this world.

In a heart-rending appeal he said "because people neglected the material needs of life and grew indifferent to the knowledge that enabled them to secure them, the country remained backward and her progress came to a standstill. "The appearance of Tulsi leaves around your neck," he continued, "will not relieve you from the clutches of the money lenders. Because you sing songs of Rama, you will not get a concession in rent from the landlords. You will not get salaries at the end of the month because you make pilgrimages every year to Pandharpur. Because the major part of the society is absorbed in these worthless mysteries of life, superstitions and mysticism, the intelligent and self-centred people get ample scope and opportunities to carry out their anti-social designs. "I, therefore, appeal to you," he concluded, "to act and utilise what little political power is coming into your hands. If you are indifferent and do not try to use it properly, your worries will have no end. Fear lurks in my mind that the slavery which we are fighting out may overtake us again. Will this awakening of ours be short-lived?"²

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¹ : Janata, dated 15th October 1932.

² : Keer, P. 213.

ABANDON THE THOUGHT OF SLAVERY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was presented with an address, on October 28, 1932, by the Rushi Samaj at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall. Dr. P. G. Solanki an Untouchable leader presided over the meeting. The Volunteers of Samta Sainik Dal were present at the meeting place to look after the arrangements.¹

Dr. Ambedkar warned his people not to get themselves lost in the temple entry movement and inter-dining. He told them that the problem of bread and butter would not be solved by it. "The sooner you remove the foolish belief that your miseries were pre-ordained, the better. The thought that your poverty is an inevitability, and is inborn and inseparable is entirely erroneous. Abandon this line of thought of considering yourselves to be slaves" he added.²

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¹ : Janata, dated 5th November 1932.

² : Keer, P. 219.

DO NOT BELIEVE IN FATE BELIEVE IN YOUR STRENGTH

Thane District Conference was held at Kasara on Saturday, 18th February 1933. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presided over the Conference. Dr. Ambedkar reached Kasara at 8 p.m. by car from Bombay. Mr. Shrivtarkar, Divakar Pagare and Ganpatbuwa Jadhav alias Madkebuwa accompanied him, while Mr. B. K. Gaikwad, K. B. Jadhav, Limbaji Bhalerao and Rokde came from Nasik. Mr. Shankarnath Barve was the Chairman of Reception Committee.¹

After issuing his statement on the Temple Entry Bill, Dr Ambedkar carried on propaganda against the spiritualistic fads and superstitions of his people which had emasculated and devitalised them for ages. He impressed upon their minds that to them bread was better than the worship of God. At this Conference, he told the Untouchables : " we want equality in Hindu religion. The *Chaturvarnya* must be rooted out. The principle that privileges for the higher classes and poverty for the lower classes must end now. The British Government is foreign Government; and so there could not be much advancement in our conditions. Do not allow disunion to grip you. It leads to ruin. Study the situation and surroundings with your own eyes. Do not forget that your fight at Mahad and Nasik won you what political status you are going to get. The news about Nasik *Satyagraha* which appeared in *The Times*, London, every day had interested and instructed the Britishers."

" What you have lost," proceeded he, " others have gained. Your humiliations are a matter of pride with others. You are made to suffer wants, privations and humiliations not because it was pre-ordained by the sins committed in your previous birth, but because of the overpowering tyranny and treachery of those who are above you. You have no lands because others have usurped them : you have no posts because others have monopolised them. Do not believe in fate. Believe in your strength."²



¹ : Janata, dated 25th February 1933.

² : Keer, P. 233.

THEY ALONE RISE WHO STRIVE

A public meeting was held at Mazgaon, Bombay in the last week of February 1933. In this meeting Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said,

“ I am in a situation in which Tilak was once placed. As long as the opponents curse me, it is taken for granted that my work for you is on the right lines and is justified. During the last two thousand years never was such an attempt made to annihilate Untouchability. The Untouchables are now convinced that the demand for *Swaraj* and the cause of the Hindus will suffer for want of support from the Depressed Classes. What the Hindus do for you is not by way of charity or mercy. They do it for their own welfare as well. The mission of our movement is to fight out tyranny, injustice and false traditions, and to undo all privileges and release the harassed people from bondage. Our cause has gained recognition because of our ceaseless struggle.”

“ Give up eating carrion. People ask me then what they should eat. In reply, I ask you to remember the example of a virtuous woman. She will never accept the life of a prostitute for betterment though she falls on evil days. She suffers for self-respect. Learn to live in this world with self-respect. You should always cherish some ambition to do something in this world. They alone rise who strive. Some of you nurse the wrong notion that you will not rise in this world. But remember that the age of helplessness is ended. A new epoch has set in. All things are now possible because of your being able to participate in the politics and legislatures of this country.”¹



¹ : Keer, Pp. 233-234.

DO NOT DEPEND UPON GOD OR SUPERMAN

“ On Saturday, the 4th March 1933 at 9.30 p.m. the meeting of Untouchables was held, on the ground of G. I. P. Railway Quarters (near Bombay Sandoharst Road). Punjaji Jadhao proposed the name of Shri R. D. Kawali, B. A., LL. B., for presidentship and was seconded by Shri Kardak. The meeting was arranged in order to present the address duly signed by 85 persons to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. For this purpose a vast pandal was erected which was fully occupied. Distinguished leaders like Shivatarkar, Naik, Sahastrabuddhe, Diwakar Pagare, Upshyam, Kamalakant Chitre, Meshram etc., attended the meeting.”¹

Diwakar Pagare presented the address in honour of Dr. Ambedkar.

While replying the address, Dr. Ambedkar said,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

“ I thank you for the address you have presented to me.

This address is full of superlatives about my work and qualities. It means you are deifying a common man like you. These ideas of hero-worship will bring ruin on you if you do not nip them in the bud. By deifying an individual, you repose faith for your safety and salvation in one single individual with the result that you get into the habit of dependence and grow indifferent to your duty. If you fall a victim to these ideas, your fate will be no better than logs of wood in the national stream of life. Your struggle will come to naught. ”

“ Do not disregard,” he continued, “ the political rights, the new epoch has bestowed upon you. Your whole class was trampled down up-till now because you were filled with ideas of helplessness. I may add that these ideas of hero-worship, deification and neglect of duty have ruined Hindu Society and are responsible for the degradation of our country.” “ In other countries,” he observed, “ during a national calamity and

¹ : Janata, dated 11th March 1933.

crisis people take united action against the national calamity, ward off the danger, and attain peace and prosperity. But our religion has drummed into our ears that a man does nothing. He is a helpless log. At the appearance of a national calamity God is supposed to descend down and save us from danger! The result is that instead of taking a united action against their enemies they await the arrival of an incarnation to do this job for them.”*

“ You must abolish your slavery yourselves. Do not depend for its abolition upon God or Superman. Your salvation lies in political powers and not in making pilgrimages and observance of fasts. Devotion to scriptures would not free you from your bondage, want and poverty. Your forefathers have been doing it for generations, but there has been no respite nor even a slight difference in your miserable life in any way. Like your forefathers, you wear rags. Like them, you subsist on thrown out crumbs ; like them, you perish in utter slums and hovels ; and like them, you fall easy victims to diseases with a death rate that rages among poultry. Your religious fasts, austerities and penances have not saved you from starvation.”

“ It is the duty of the Legislature,” he concluded, “ to provide for your food, clothes, shelter, education, medicine and all the means of earning a livelihood. The work of law-making and of its execution is to be performed with your consent, help and will. In short, law is the abode of all worldly happiness. You capture the power of law-making. It is, therefore, your duty to divert your attention from fast, worship and penance and apply it to capturing law-making power. That way lies your salvation. That way will end your starvation. Remember that it is not enough that a people are numerically in majority. They must be always watchful, strong, well-educated and self-respecting to attain and maintain success.”¹



* Janata, dated 11th March 1933.

¹ : Keer, Pp. 234-35.

I WILL WREST AS MUCH POWER FOR THE COUNTRY AS POSSIBLE

On the eve of his departure to London, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was given an address, on April 23, 1933 by the Depressed Classes of Poona at the Damodar Hall in Bombay. About 8-10 thousand people were assembled for this meeting. Raibahadur S. K. Bole presided over the meeting. Mr. P. L. Lokhande read the address and Presented to Dr. Ambedkar on behalf of Nasik District while Mr. Haribhau Hanumant Rokde presented the address on behalf of Pune District. On this Occasion various district Committees donated the different amount collected by them to Dr. Ambedkars.¹

“Addressing the meeting, he said that during the second session of the Round Table Conference he was helpless. He could not estrange the British Government by siding with Gandhi who was not prepared to concede anything to the Depressed Classes. He declared that since his struggle for the rights of the Depressed Classes was nearing success, he would devote his energies to wresting as much power for the country as was possible for him. At the conclusion of the meeting, he appealed to his people not to come to the Ballard Pier to give him a send-off as was their practice. He said they should not do it at the cost of one day’s wages.”²



¹ : Janata, dated 29th April 1933.

² : Keer, P. 238.

FIND MEN WHO WILL PROMOTE YOUR INTERESTS

“ The third session of the Kolaba District Peasants' Conference was held on Sunday the 16th December 1934 at Chari in Alibag Taluka under the presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The preliminary arrangements of the Conference were made by the peasants themselves. A spacious *pandal* was erected with a dais in the centre for the president and distinguished guests. The meeting place was nicely decorated with flags and buntings. Cloth boards bearing slogans such as “ Victory to the peasants ”, “ Peasants, Unite ” etc., were seen hanging in the *pandal*. Dr. Ambedkar was garlanded by the peasants at Saral, Rewas, Hashiwre, Naringi etc. The Conference commenced its sitting at 2 p.m. About 6,000 peasants from all over the district had collected for the Conference. Among those present at the Conference were Messrs. G. N. Sahastrabuddhe (Bombay S. S. League), M. V. Donde (Principal, Parel High School), S. V. Parulekar (Servants of India Society), D. V. Pradhan, K. V. Chitre, T. V. Parvate (Editor, Maratha), S. G. Tipnis, C. G. Deshpande, N. M. Deshpande, Subhedar Savadkar, Damuanna Potnis (Bhor Praja Parishad), and others Mr. Ardeshir Baria, landlord of Pezari also attended. The Mamlatdar of Alibag, Police Sub-Inspector and other Government officers were present.

Mr. N. N. Patil, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates.

Dr. Ambedkar's Speech

Dr. Ambedkar received great ovation as he rose to speak.

He said ;—

“ You have today, to concentrate your attention to find out ways to remove your grievances. The term *Shetkari*, I must tell you, as commonly used today is a misnomer, people who

possess extensive lands and who have no manual labour to perform are classified with those who have to toil for their bread on a farm with no piece of land of their own. The interests of these two classes are widely apart and conflicting with each other. It would be wrong to allow the one to be interwoven with the other, and I would suggest that a clear definition ought to be made of the term "*Shetkari*".

Now let me refer to that question which today, believe the audience especially the people of "*Chari*" have uppermost in their minds. I mean the strike that the tenants of *Chari* have declared against the *Savakars* and land-lords for the last two years. Without going into the merits of the strike, I for once think that such disputes that may be existing between the land-lords and their tenants must as a matter of fact be decided by Arbitration Boards composed of representatives of both the parties with a Government nominee and empowered with some legal status. The decision of such an Arbitration Board ought to be binding on both the parties, I see no reason why in an instance like this, the Government should not intervene and appoint such a Board.

There are, I know, a great many grievances in this part of the Presidency which arise out of a system-popularly called the "*Khoti System*". I am aware of the pitiable condition into which the tenants-at-will are thrown at the hands of *Khots*. The tenant is evicted from his land by the land-lord at his sweet will which renders the income of the tenant most unsteady and makes his life miserable. This is a glaring injustice under which the tenants are labouring. Such freedom to the *Khot* to evict the tenant summarily deprives him of the fruit of labour that he has put in the soil for a number of years. Such grievances of the tenants-at-will must be immediately removed by legislation which will compel the *Khot* to pay adequate compensation to the tenant who has suffered from the eviction. These injustices have in my opinion reached their climax in the actions of the land-lord in threatening the tenant to demolish his house situated on the *Khoti* land whenever a dispute arises between a tenant and

a *Khot* in order to compel the tenant to meet the wishes of the land-lord. I do not understand why such a glaring injustice should be allowed to continue. I must say that the Government too are guilty of a charge of a grave nature in that they have courtenanced such an inhuman injustice. Take the instance of the housing accommodation afforded by some mill-owners in Bombay. At the time of the strike the mill-workers stand in the fear of losing their jobs and also their quarters which makes them lose half the sting of their fight. Such a state of affairs must not be allowed to continue and today's Conference must find out an occasion to ventilate their feelings in this respect.

You must never forget that the remedy for the grievances that I have just mentioned lies in bringing about properly effective legislation. A measure such as that of a strike is not the sure means of removing your grievance. I do not grudge the right of the aggrieved to resort to strike. But that is not a weapon which they can everynow and then use. How to get such legislation on the statute book is again a question which you have to solve. Unless you have your own representatives in the Legislative Councils, you will not be able to do it. You must find men who will always promote your interests. While choosing your representative you must not allow yourself to be misled into believing that such leaders as the Congress are the only bodies who are fighting for your cause. If the Congress represents anything to-day, it represents nothing except an element against the British.

After the resolutions for the betterment of peasants were passed the President made a few concluding remarks thanking the Conference.”¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 22nd December 1934.

UNFORTUNATELY I WAS BORN A HINDU UNTOUCHABLE BUT I WILL NOT DIE A HINDU

With a view to reviewing the political and social situation in the light of ten-year old relentless social struggle, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar decided to hold a Conference of the Depressed Classes at Yeola (District Nasik) on Sunday, the 13th October 1935.

On Saturday, the 12th October 1935 when Dr. Ambedkar arrived at Nasik at 11 a.m. he was welcomed with great enthusiasm and brought him in the city in a big procession. He inaugurated library at Nasik City.

On this occasion he said,

“ You believe in selfhelp. You must stand on your own feet and fight for your improvement. If any grave disaster occurs in my case, you should be able to continue the struggle after me.”

In Hiralal Lane of Ravivarpeth at 9 p.m. an intercaste dinner was arranged in which Shri Deshpande, the only Congressman participated.

On Sunday the 13th October 1935, Dr Ambedkar went to Vinchur where he was welcomed. Similarly while going to Yeola, he was welcomed by the villagers on the way.

Yeola Municipality presented an Address in the morning to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. While replying to the Address Dr. Ambedkar said,

“ Now we come to the conclusion that there is no charge in attitude of the touchables and they are not ready to behave with us, with affection despite of our continuous struggle. As such we have decided to remain separate from Hindus, to live with self-help and struggle to attain self-elevation.” ¹

“ The Conference met at Yeola on October 13, 1935 at 10.00 p.m. and was attended by about 10,000 Untouchables of all shades of opinion including representatives from the Hyderabad State

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. 6, Pp 84-85.

and the Central Provinces. Expressing his pleasure at the great response and interest evinced by the Depressed Classes in planning their future, Amritrao Rankhambe, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome speech said, "Degenerated Hinduism was rightly called Brahminism because it benefited only the Brahmin hierarchy as a class".

In a tremendously feeling speech lasting over an hour and a half, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar recounted the plight of the Depressed Classes in all spheres, economic, social, educational and political and pointed out the immense sacrifices made by them to secure the barest human rights as members of the same community under the aegis of Hinduism. He especially referred to the Kalaram Temple Entry Movement wherein inhuman treatment was meted out to them during the past five years, and told them how their struggle to secure elementary rights and equal status in the Hindu Society had come to naught. He said that it gave him a very painful realisation that the time and money spent on and efforts made to achieve those objectives had proved utterly fruitless.

He, therefore, expressed his opinion that the time for making a final decision to settle the matter had arrived. The disabilities they were labouring under and the indignities they had to put up with, he added, were the result of their being members of the Hindu community. He inquired if it were not better for them to abjure that fold and embrace some other faith that would give them an equal status, a secure position and rightful treatment.

He, then, with a rise in his voice, exhorted them to sever their connections with Hinduism and seek solace and self-respect in another religion, but warned them to be very careful in choosing the new faith and to see that equality of treatment, status and opportunities was guaranteed to them unreservedly.

Referring to his own personal decision in the matter, Dr. Ambedkar said that unfortunately for him he was born a Hindu Untouchable. It was beyond his power to prevent that, but he declared that it was within his power to refuse to live under ignoble and humiliating conditions. "I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu," he thundered. In the end he asked

his people to stop the Kalaram Temple *Satyagraha* as the past five years had demonstrated the futility of such agitation against the tyrannical caste Hindus, who had thwarted their attempts and showed impenitent hearts. He exhorted them to conduct themselves in such a way in future as would leave no doubt to the outside world of their decision to be and to remain a separate community outside the Hindu fold, carving out for themselves a future worthy of free citizens.

Accordingly, after a full discussion, the conference passed, in view of the callous and criminal indifference shown by the caste Hindus to their demand for social equality, a resolution instructing the Depressed Classes to stop the struggle which they had carried on for the past ten years for raising the Untouchables to a status equal with that of the caste Hindus and in the hope of consolidating and strengthening both sections into a great and powerful society. It further exhorted the Untouchables to stop frittering away their energies over fruitless attempts and to devote themselves to securing an honourable status, and an independent position on the basis of equality with the other societies in Hindustan.”¹

“Dr. Ambedkar alongwith his lieutenants returned from Yeola and stayed at Nasik. During his stay, the Sweeper (Meghawal) community offered them tea and dinner party on 15th and 16th October 1935.”²

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's announcement to renounce Hindu religion and to embrace some other religion got wide publicity on a global scale. It was like tornado hurled at the impenient Hindu Society. It was a thunderbolt and gave a bolt inblue to the Hindus. This created an atmosphere of furore amongst various groups of Hindu fold. There were tremendous mixed reactions expressed by these groups which were as follow :—Editors.

“The ruthless and misanthropic Orthodox Hindus were unmoved by the decision of the Depressed Classes. Decrepit and decayed as they had grown, they had lost their thinking power and vision. The illiterate Non-Brahmins thought that the

¹: Keer, Pp. 252-53.

²: Khairmode, Vol. 6, P. 86.

decision on religious matters was the concern of the Brahmins. Rejoiced at the Yeola decision, the Orthodox Hindus heaved a sigh of relief ; and the Nasik Orthodox Hindus, who were harassed for the past five years by the Temple Entry *Satyagraha*, were exceedingly jubilant over the decision of the Depressed Classes to go out of Hindu fold. They applied now to the Collector for the removal of the ban on the Nasik chariot procession in the light of the fresh declaration of the Untouchables. Enlightened and political-minded opinion in the country deplored the Untouchables' decision.

A Sindhi Hindu wrote a letter in blood and threatened Dr. Ambedkar with death, if he renounced Hinduism.”*¹

Gandhiji's reaction on Dr. Ambedkar's Yeola Speech :

“ Wardha, October 15.

Interviewed by the Associated Press representative regarding Dr. Ambedkar's Speech, Gandhiji said, “The speech attributed to Dr. Ambedkar seems unbelievable. If, however, he has made such a speech and the conference had adopted the resolution of complete severance from Hinduism and acceptance of any faith that would guarantee equality, I regard both as unfortunate events, especially when one notices, despite isolated events to the contrary, Untouchability on its last legs.

I can understand the anger of a high-souled and highly educated person like Dr. Ambedkar over atrocities such as were committed in Kawitha and other villages.

But religion is not like house or cloak which can be changed at will. It is more an integral part of One's self than of One's body. Religion is the tie that binds one to one's creator and whilst the body perishes as it has to religion persists even after death.

If Dr. Ambedkar has any faith in God, I would urge him to assuage his wrath and reconsider his position and examine his ancestral religion on its own merits and not through the weaknesses of its unfaithful followers.

* The Vividha Vritta, 3rd November 1935.

¹ : Keer, Pp. 256-258.

“Lastly, I am convinced, change of faith by him and those who passed the resolution would not serve the cause which they have at heart for millions of unsophisticated illiterate Harijans would not listen to him and them when they have disowned their ancestral faith, especially when it is remembered that their lives for good or evil are intertwined with those of caste Hindus.” — A.P.”¹ *

Dr. Ambedkar's views on Gandhiji's reaction :

“Bombay, October 15,

“*What religion we shall belong to have is not decided ; what ways and means we shall adopt, we have not thought out; but we have decided one thing, and that after due deliberations and with deep conviction, that Hindu religion is not good for us,*” declared Dr. Ambedkar when shown by the Associated Press representative Gandhiji's comment on his Nasik speech.

“Inequality” he said, “is the very basis of it, and its ethics is such that the Depressed Classes can never acquire their full manhood. Let none think I have done this in a huff or as a matter of wrath against the treatment meted out to the Depressed Classes at Kavitha village or any other place. It is a deeply deliberated decision. I agree with Gandhiji that religion is necessary, but I do not agree that man should have his ancestral religion if he finds that, that religion is repugnant to his notions of the sort of religion he needs as a standard for the regulation of his own conduct and as a source of inspiration for his advancement and well-being.”

Asked when he proposed to get himself converted and whether it would be an individual action or mass action Dr. Ambedkar said, “I have made up my mind to change my religion. I do

¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 16th October 1935.

* Gandhiji published his articles in connection with the conversion issue. See Appendix 1.

not care if the masses do not come. It is for them to decide. If they feel it is good they will follow me; but on the contrary, if they feel it is not they will not follow my example. My own advice is that Gandhiji should allow the Depressed Classes to chalk out their own line of action. Kavitha does not represent an isolated incident but it is the very basis of the system found in the ancestral religion of the Hindus.”¹

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¹: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 16th October 1935.

MY ABILITY AND EMINENCE WERE THE FRUIT OF MY PATIENT LABOUR AND INTELLECT

The public meeting was held on Sunday, 8th December 1935 at Foras Road, Bombay. This was the first meeting being held at Bombay after the declaration of intention of conversion by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at Yeola. About 10,000 Untouchables alongwith 50-75 Muslims and few Christians were present at this meeting. Dr. Solanki presided over the meeting. Mr. Devrao Naik made an introductory remarks followed by a speech of Mr. Surba Tipnis. Mr. Donde and Bapusaheb Sahastrabuddhe were also present.¹

“Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that the issue of conversion would be first decided at a Mahar Conference which he was contemplating. Letters were now pouring in the Press, the majority of them condemning severely Dr. Ambedkar, and a minority upholding his stand. Among such letters and articles was a letter written by a semi-social reformer blustering that Dr. Ambedkar would be a nonentity, if he went out of the pale of Hinduism ; for, according to him, Dr. Ambedkar owed his eminence to his Untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar, in his characteristic thrust, replied that his ability and eminence were the fruit of his patient labour and intellect, and so he would be able to preserve his individuality in any fold or in the company of any literary or political worthies, whether Brahmin or Non-Brahmin. He, however, added that he would prefer a life without distinction in any other fold if his down-trodden people prospered in it.”²

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¹ : Janata, dated 15th December 1935.

² : Keer, P. 260.

GO ANYWHERE, WE HAVE TO FIGHT FOR OUR WELFARE

Yeola declaration of conversion created a wave of reactions amongst Hindus. There was increasing support from Hindu Untouchables for this declaration. To support this declaration from the Maharashtra Untouchable Youths Conference was arranged on 11th and 12th January 1936 at Pune. Prof. N. Shivraj, a wellknown leader from Madras, was the President of the Conference. About ten thousands ladies and gents had attended this Conference. Few Hindu touchables, Muslims and Sikhs were also present in this conference.¹

In his Presidential address Shivraj said : "The only way to get rid of Untouchability is that the Depressed Classes should leave Hindu religion not necessarily by conversion to another religion already existing but possibly by starting a new religion, or by reviving the ancient one practised among the Adi-Dravidas, long before the Aryans brought to India Hinduism with its various customs."

Dr. Ambedkar spoke after Dr. Solanki. In his speech Dr. Ambedkar, however, warned his people against the erroneous view that conversion would relieve them from hell and would lead them to the paradise of equality. He further told them that under any new religion they would be required to fight for liberty and equality. "We are fully conscious of the fact," he observed, "that go anywhere we will, we would have to fight for our welfare if we took to Christianity, Islam or Sikhism. It is foolish to suppose that in the event of our conversion to Islam everybody from amongst us would be a Nawab or would become the Pope if we went over to Christianity. Go we may anywhere, fight is inevitable in store for us." He added that his terms for a compromise with the Caste Hindus to keep the struggle for equality inside the Hindu fold would be never fulfilled by the Hindus because bread and butter was not the question at issue. That there was some definite divine purpose behind their

¹: Janata, dated 8th and 15th February 1936.

struggle was now beyond doubt ; otherwise there could not have come forward proposals offering them money—it is said from the Nizam*—to the tune of rupees seven crores from conflicting quarters ! But for God this would not have been possible, he added. Referring to the Harijan Fund started by Gandhi, he said that its object was to enslave the Untouchables to the camp of Caste Hindus. He declared that he was now bent on conversion whether the Caste Hindus meant help or hindrance. Even if God were produced before him to dissuade him from leaving the Hindu fold, he would not go back on his resolve.”¹

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* Donde, M. V., The Janata, 14th April 1951.

¹ : Keer, Pp. 261—263.

DECIDED TO RENOUNCE HINDUISM

At the end of March 1936, the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal Lahore, informed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that they had postponed their Conference to the middle of May. There was a stir in the Punjab press and the orthodox public had subjected the Mandal to a very bitter criticism for having elected its President a leader like Dr. Ambedkar 'who was a declared hater of Hindu religion'. The result was that even the staunch leaders like Bhai Parmanand, Dr. Narang, Mahatma Hans Raj and Raja Narendra Nath, had to disassociate themselves from the Mandal. To give a correct idea to Dr. Ambedkar of the situation, the Mandal, whose leading light was Sant Ram, sent Har Bhagwan to Bombay. He saw Dr. Ambedkar in Bombay on April 9 and took away the portion of the presidential address which was ready.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar also left for Amritsar on 10th April 1936 to attend the Sikh Mission's Conference, which was to meet on April 13 and 14. The Sikh Conference was attended by huge crowds of Sikhs and the Depressed Classes from the Punjab, Kerala, U. P. and C. P. The Conference was presided over by Sardar Bahadur Hukum Singh, a retired District Judge, and the Chairman of the reception committee was Wasakhas Singh. Both the President and the Chairman in their addresses stressed the need for improving the plight of the Depressed Classes by intensive missionary work.

Addressing the Conference, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar expressed his approval of the principles of equality among the Sikhs and added that he had not yet made up his mind, though he had decided to renounce Hinduism.

Sir Jogendra Singh, another speaker, stressed the need for missionary work and the creation of a trust for the purpose, and

appealed for funds. The main feature of the Conference was the conversion of five prominent Depressed Class leaders of the Thiyya community of Kerala headed by Dr. Kuttir and fifty others from the U. P. and C. P., to Sikhism.”¹



¹: Keer, P. 267.

I CANNOT SACRIFICE MY CONSCIENCE FOR SUCCESS

“When Dr. B. R. Ambedkar arrived at Wardha on 1st May 1936 in the morning, people of Depressed Classes welcomed him with great enthusiasm. During the stay of Dr. Ambedkar at Wardha ‘Nirbhaya Tarun Sangh’ took precaution in all respects. Dr. Ambedkar also visited Nalwadi. At 11.30 a.m. Depressed Classes leaders namely Purushottam Khaparde, Shankarrao Sonawane, Gomaji Tembhare discussed the issue of conversion with Dr. Ambedkar who stated in unequivocal terms that,

‘I do not promote Islam or Christian religions to anybody as yet. If anybody with his own responsibility promotes Islam or any other religion, he will be cheated for which I shall not be responsible. It is a fact that I have declared about conversion. But I have not said to adopt any particular religion as yet. Till that time all should carry out propaganda about conversion but they should not propagate any particular religion. When I declare, then only we all seven crore Untouchables convert at a time.’

Thereafter Dr. Ambedkar discussed with other Untouchable leaders privately.”¹

Keer narrated the visit of Dr. Ambedkar at Wardha as follow :

“About this time Gandhi camp was also disturbed by Dr. Ambedkar’s activities. Dr. Ambedkar was therefore persuaded by Seth Walchand Hirachand to see Gandhi. Accompanied by Walchand, Dr. Ambedkar met Gandhi at Wardha and then at Segaoon,* but they could not agree on the solution to the problem. Gandhi wrongly thought that there were many influences in India and London acting behind

¹ : Daily Maharashtra, Nagpur, dated 6th May 1936. Reprinted : Kosare, P. 296.

* Later it was called Sevagram.

Dr. Ambedkar and the problem had been allowed to assume unduly large proportions because of his threats.*

On his way back from Segaon, Dr. Ambedkar was received enthusiastically at Wardha station by the Depressed Classes.

Walchand Hirachand and Jamnalal Bajaj, the millionaire supporters of Gandhi, asked Dr. Ambedkar why he did not join Gandhi's camp, so that he might have boundless resources at his disposal for the uplift of the Depressed Classes. Dr. Ambedkar told them frankly that he vitally differed from Gandhi on many points. Upon this they referred to Nehru and asked him to emulate his example by putting aside his own views. He silenced them by saying that he was not a man to whom Nehru's case would apply and added that he could not sacrifice his conscience for success.

The millionaires showed their surprise at the crowds of the Depressed Classes that had gathered to receive Dr. Ambedkar, and they remarked that although they spent money on their cause the Harijans did not respond to them properly. Dr. Ambedkar at once answered that it was the difference between a mother and a nurse."¹

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*Gandhi. M. K., *Letters to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* P. 115.

¹: Keer, Pp 268-269.

CONVERSION IS NECESSARY FOR YOUR EMANCIPATION AND ADVANCEMENT

On Sunday 17th May 1936, the Untouchables of East & South of Thane District arranged a large Conference at Kalyan. It was arranged under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to support the declaration of conversion openly. The Untouchables from hundred to hundred fifty villages thronged at the Railway Station to welcome Dr. Ambedkar. When he reached Kalyan Railway Station at 3 p.m. he was greeted by various leaders.

Outside the Railway Station people shouted the slogans "Ambedkar Jindabad, thode din me Bhimraj". There were about four thousand Untouchables in the procession. The bands and physical shows were arranged in the procession. The whole atmosphere amongst the so called — Dumb — Untouchables was full of love and self-respect.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar explained as to why there was no alternative for the conversion of the Untouchables.—Editors.

"You have assembled here to hear my views about conversion. I, therefore, feel it is necessary to talk to you in detail about the subject.

Some people often raise the question, "Why should we change our religion?" Then I feel an impulse to ask a counter-question, "Why should we not change our religion?"

I would like to relate some instances in my life to explain why conversion is necessary and then it would be easy for you to understand why I chose conversion. You, too, must have had similar experiences in your life.

There are some four or five incidents in my life which have left deep impressions on my mind, and led me to decide in favour of the renunciation of Hinduism and conversion to some other religion. I would like to relate, today, only two or three of these incidents.

I was born at Mhow, Indore, where my father was employed in the army. He held the rank of a Subedar at that time. Since we lived in the cantonment we had little to do with the world outside the military area. I had no experience of 'Untouchability'. When my father retired from service on pension, we shifted to Satara to live there. My mother had passed away when I was barely five years old. Famine broke out in Goregaon, in the District of Satara, and to combat this the Government started 'Famine Relief Employment'. They started digging a watertank and my father was appointed as a pay-master to disburse wages to the workers in the labour camp. He had to join the labour camp at Goregaon and we, the four children, were left behind at Satara. For nearly four to five years in Satara, we had to live only on rice. It was only after coming to Satara that we began to experience what Untouchability was. The first thing which struck me most was that no barber was prepared to cut our hair. This disturbed us. My elder sister who is still alive used to cut my hair sitting on platform outside our house. I could not understand why inspite of the presence of so many barbers, no barber was prepared to cut our hair.

The second incident also relates to that period. Whilst my father was at Goregaon, he used to send us letters. In one letter he invited us to visit Goregaon. The idea that we would be travelling by train to Goregaon thrilled me very much because I had never seen a train before. With the money sent by my father we got new clothes stitched and my brother, my sister's daughter, and I, set off for Goregaon.

We had sent a letter beforehand but, unfortunately, due to the carelessness or a mistake on the part of our servant, it had not reached my father. We were certain that my father would send a servant to receive us at the railway station. On our alighting from the train we were distressed to find the servant nowhere in sight.

Soon everybody departed and there were no passengers, excepting us, left on the platform. We waited in vain for some three quarters of an hour. The Station Master enquired who we were meeting, what caste we belonged to, and where we wanted to go. We told him that we belonged to the Mahar caste. This

gave him a shock and he retreated some five steps backwards. But seeing us well dressed, he presumed that we belonged to some well-to-do family. He assured us that he would try to get a cart for us. But owing to our being members of the Mahar Caste, no bullock-cart driver was willing to drive us. Evening was approaching and till 6 or 7 p.m., we did not succeed in getting a cart. Finally a cart-man agreed to take us in his cart. But he made it clear at the outset that he would not drive the cart for us.

I had been living in the military area and driving a cart was not difficult for me. As soon as we agreed to this condition, he came with his cart and we, all of us children, started for Goregaon.

At a short distance outside the village we came across a brook. The cart driver asked us to eat our food there for no water was available elsewhere on the way. Accordingly, we got down from the cart and ate our food. The water was murky and mixed with dung. In the meantime, the cart driver also returned after having his dinner.

As the evening grew darker, the driver quietly boarded the cart and sat beside us. It became so dark soon, that, neither any flickering lamp nor any human being was visible for miles. Fear, darkness, and loneliness made us cry. It was well past mid-night and we were frightened. So scared were we that we thought we should never reach Goregaon. When we reached a '*Naka*' (toll post) we jumped out of the cart. We made enquiries from the toll-collector (*Nakadar*) whether we could get anything to eat in the vicinity. I spoke to him in Persian. I knew how to speak in Persian and had no difficulty in speaking to him. He replied in a very curt manner and pointed towards the hills. Somehow, we spent the night near the ravine and early in the morning, we set off again on our journey to Goregaon. At last we reached Goregaon on the following day in the afternoon, utterly exhausted and almost half-dead.

The third incident relates to the period when I served in Baroda State. With a scholarship granted by Baroda State, I had gone for education abroad. After returning from England, in accord with the terms of the agreement, I came to serve under the Baroda

Durbar. I could not get a house to live in at Baroda. Neither a Hindu nor any Muslim was prepared to rent out a house to me in the city of Baroda. Failing to get a house in any locality, I decided to get accommodation in a Parsi *Dharamsala*. After having stayed in America and England, I had developed a fair complexion and an impressive personality. Giving myself a Parsi name, 'Adalji Sorabji' I began to live in the Parsi *Dharamsala*. The Parsi manager agreed to accommodate me at Rs. 2 per diem. But soon the people got wind of the fact that His Highness the Maharaja Gaikwad of Baroda had appointed a Mahar boy as an officer in his Durbar, my living in the Parsi *Dharamsala* under an assumed name gave rise to suspicion and my secret was soon out.

On the second day of my stay, when I was just leaving for my office after taking breakfast, a mob of some fifteen or twenty Parsis, armed with *lathis* accosted me, threatening to kill me and demanded who I was. I replied, 'I am a Hindu'. But they were not to be satisfied with this answer. Exasperated, they began to shower abuses on me and bade me vacate the room immediately. My presence of mind and knowledge gave me the strength to face the situation boldly. Politely I asked for permission to stay for eight hours more. Throughout the day I searched for a house to live in, but miserably failed to get any place to hide my head. I approached my friends but all turned me down on some plea or the other, expressing their inability to accommodate me. I was utterly disappointed and exhausted. What to do next ? I just could not decide. Frustrated and exhausted, I quietly sat down at one place, with tears flowing out of my eyes. Seeing no hope of getting a house, and no alternative but to quit, I tendered my resignation and left for Bombay by the night train.

Like these horrified incidents of my life, you too, must have undergone hardships in your life. I would like to ask you all, what is the sense in living in a society which is devoid of humanity, which does not respect you, protect you or treat you as a human being ? Instead, it insults you, humiliates you and never misses an opportunity to hurt you. Any person with an iota of self-respect and decency will not like to remain in this satanic religion. Only those who love to be slaves can remain in this religion.

My father and forefathers were devout Hindus, but they could not get an education owing to the restrictions imposed by the Hindu religion. That religion did not allow them to bear arms. It was not possible under Hinduism even to acquire wealth. While remaining an adherent of this religion my father could not acquire these three things.

I wished to learn Sanskrit but owing to the restrictions imposed by the Hindu religion, it was not possible for me to learn Sanskrit. Now it has become possible for me to acquire education and wealth and also to bear arms.

In view of the fact that the Hindu religion which forced your forefathers to lead a life of degradation, and heaped all sorts of indignities on them, kept them poor and ignorant, why should you remain within the fold of such a diabolical creed ? If, like your forefathers, you too, continue to accept a degraded and lowly position, and humiliation, you will continue to be hated. Nobody will respect you and nobody will help you.

It is for these reasons that the question of conversion has become important for us. If you continue to remain within the fold of Hinduism, you cannot attain a status higher than that of a slave. For me, personally, there is no bar. If I continue to remain an Untouchable, I can attain any position that a Hindu can. Whether I remain a Hindu or not, it makes little difference to me. I can become a Judge of the High Court, a Member of the Legislative Assembly or even a Minister. But, it is for your emancipation and advancement, that conversion appears to be very necessary to me.

To change this degraded and disgraceful existence into a golden life, conversion is absolutely necessary. You will certainly get assistance and co-operation to improve your condition, from friends and well-wishers, I hope. I have to start conversion in order to improve your lot. I am not at all worried about the question of my personal interest or progress. Whatever I am doing today, it is for your betterment and in your interest.

You look upon me as 'God' but I am not a god. I am a human being like you all. Whatever help you want from me, I am prepared to give you. I have decided to liberate you from your present hopeless and degraded condition. I am not doing anything for my personal gain. I will continue to struggle for your upliftment and to make your life useful and meaningful. You must realise your responsibility and follow the path which I am showing you. If you follow it earnestly, it would not be difficult to achieve your goal."¹



¹: Janata : dated 23rd May, 1936. Published in Marathi. (Translated)

WHAT WAY EMANCIPATION ?

On the background of his declaration that, " I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu." at Yeola, Distt. Nasik, Maharashtra, on 13th October, 1935, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar convened a Conference on 30th and 31st May 1936 at Dadar, Bombay. The sole aim of this Conference was to assess the support of his own people for the conversion movement. It was attended by about thirty five thousand Untouchable Mahars.

In a specially erected pandal the following slogans were displayed.

- * **Man is not for religion, religion is for man.**
- * **To become humane, convert yourselves.**
- * **To get organised, convert yourselves.**
- * **To achieve strength, convert yourselves.**
- * **To secure equality, convert yourselves.**
- * **To get liberty, convert yourselves.**
- * **To make your domestic life happy, convert yourselves.**
- * **Why do you remain in that religion which does not treat you as human beings ?**
- * **Why do you remain in that religion which prohibits you from entering temples ?**
- * **Why do you remain in that religion which prohibits you from drinking water ?**
- * **Why do you remain in that religion which does not allow you to get education ?**
- * **Why do you remain in that religion which insults you at every step ?**
- * **Why do you remain in that religion which obstructs you from getting a job ?**

- * A religion which prohibits righteous relations between man and man is not a religion but a display of force.
- * A religion which treats recognition of humanity as irreligion is not a religion but a disease.
- * A religion which allows the touch of unholy animals but prohibits the touch of human beings is not a religion but a foolishness.
- * A religion which precludes one class from getting education, forbids it to accumulate wealth, to bear arms, is not a religion but a mockery of human life.
- * A religion that compels the illiterate to remain illiterate, the poor to remain poor, is not a religion but a punishment.
- * Those who profess that the God is omnipresent but treat men worse than animals, are hypocrites. Do not keep company of such people.
- * Those who feed ants with sugar but kill men by prohibiting them from drinking water are hypocrites. Do not keep their company.

Mr. Stanley Jones, a European missionary and Mr. B. J. Jadhav were the special invitees. There were a number of Sikh and Muslim leaders and priests who were eager to catch any direct or indirect hint in the matter of conversion. The object of the Conference was to devise ways and means to implement the resolution passed at Yeola on 13th Oct. 1935. Mr. D. Dolas welcomed the delegates while Mr. B. S. Venkatrao, a Depressed Classes leader from Hyderabad presided over the Conference.¹

¹: Janata , dated 20th June, 1936.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar spoke elaborately in Marathi on 31st May 1936. He delivered a prepared speech.—Editors

He said,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You must have come to know by now that this conference has been purposefully called upon to ponder over the declaration of conversion which I made recently. The Subject of conversion is very dear to me. Not so only, I feel the whole of your future depends upon this subject. I have no hesitation in saying that you have clearly understood the gravity of this problem. Had it not been so, you would not have assembled here in such a large number. I am very happy to see this mammoth gathering.

Need for the Conversion

Since the time of my declaration of the conversion, our men conducted several meetings at various places and expressed their views and opinions, which I hope must have reached you. But so far we had no opportunity to gather to discuss and decide the problem of the conversion. I was very much concerned for such an opportunity. You will all agree that planning is very necessary for making the movement of conversion a success. A conversion is not a child play. It is not a subject of entertainment. It deals with, how to make man's life successful. Just as a boatman has to make all necessary preparations before he starts for voyage, so also we have to make such preparations. Without this, it will not be possible to reach the other shore. But as the boatman does not load the luggage unless he gets an idea of the number of passengers boarding the boat, so also, my position is like him and I cannot proceed without definite facts. Unless I get an idea as to how many persons are willing to leave the Hindu fold, I cannot start preparation for the conversion. When I expressed the idea before some workers in Bombay that I would not be able to judge the public opinion unless we meet in a conference, they voluntarily shouldered the responsibility of calling this conference without putting up any excuse about expenses and labour. What pains they had to take has already been described by our revered leader and the President of the Reception Committee, Shri Rewji Dagduji Dolas in his speech. I am extremely indebted to the Reception Committee of the Conference for arranging the meeting after making such strenuous efforts.

Why only Conference of Mahars ?

Some people may raise an objection as to why the Conference has been called upon only of the Mahars ? If the declaration of the conversion is meant for all the Untouchables, why has not a meeting of all the Untouchables been convened ? Before starting the discussion on the issues before the Conference, I feel it obligatory to reply to these questions. There are various reasons for convening the Conference only of the Mahars. Firstly, neither any safeguards from the government nor social rights to be demanded from the Hindus through this Conference. The only question before this Conference is, 'What should be done for the betterment of our life ?' How are we to carve the path for our future life ? The question can be solved and need to be solved by the respective castes separately. This is one of the reasons, why I have not called a Conference of all the Untouchables.

There is another reason for calling the Conference of only the Mahars. About ten months have passed since the declaration was made. During this period, sufficient efforts have been made to awaken the public conscience. I feel, the proper time to judge the public opinion has come. In my opinion, to do this, meetings of each caste separately, is the simplest way to judge its opinion. In order to materialise the problem of conversion, it is very necessary to judge public opinion. And I believe, public opinion judged through meetings of each caste separately will be more representative and reliable than the opinion arrived at through a common meeting of all the Untouchables. Such a meeting, though termed as of all the Untouchables, will not necessarily be representative of all the Untouchable castes. In order to avoid this sort of situation, and to ensure the public opinion, this meeting of Mahars alone has been called. Though the other communities are not included, they are not at loss. If they do not intend to convert, they have no reason to regret for not being included in this Conference. If at all they wish to leave their religion, nothing can come in their way, only because they have not participated in this Conference. The other communities from the Untouchables are free to hold meetings like the Mahars and express their opinion. I would advice them to hold such meetings, and I will extend whatever help is needed from me, to the best of my capacity. This much is enough as an introduction. Now I turn to the main subject.

For a common man this subject of conversion is very important but also very difficult to understand. It is not an easy task to satisfy the common man on the subject of conversion. Hence, it is difficult to bring the idea of conversion into reality, unless you are all satisfied. I shall, therefore, try my level best to explain the subject as simply as possible.

Material Aspect of Conversion

The matter of conversion should be viewed through two aspects—Social as well as Religious; Material as well as Spiritual. Whatever may be the aspect, or line of thinking, it is necessary to understand in the beginning, the nature of the Untouchability and how it is practised. Without this understanding, you will not be able to realise the real meaning underlying my declaration of the conversion. In order to have a clear understanding of the Untouchability and its practice in real life, I want you to recall the stories of the atrocities perpetrated against you. The instances of beating by caste Hindus for the simple reason that you have claimed the right to enrol your children in Government schools, or the right to draw water from a public well, or the right to take a marriage procession with the groom on a horse-back, are very common. You all know about such incidents as they happen just before your eyes. But there are several other causes for which atrocities are committed on the Untouchables by the Caste-Hindus which if revealed, will surprise the public outside Hindusthan. The Untouchables are beaten for putting on clothes of superior quality. They have been whipped because they used the utensils made of metal like copper etc. Their houses are burnt because the land has been brought for cultivation. They are beaten for putting on the sacred thread on their body. They are beaten for refusing to carry the dead animals and eat the carrion, or for walking through the village road with socks and shoes on, or for not bowing down before the caste-Hindus, for taking water in the copper pot while going out in the field to ease. Recently, an instance has been noticed, where the Untouchables were beaten for serving *Chapaties* in the dinner party. You must have heard and some of you must have also experienced such type of atrocities. Where beating is not possible, you might be aware as to how the weapon of boycott is

used against you. You all know, how the Caste-Hindus have made your daily life unbearable by prohibiting you from getting labour, by disallowing your cattle to graze in the jungles and prohibiting your men from entering the village. But very few of you might have realised as to why all this happens. What is at the root of their tyranny? To me, it is very necessary, that we understand it.

This is a Matter of Class Struggle

The instances cited above have nothing to do with the virtues or vices of an individual. This is not a feud between two rival men. The problem of the Untouchability is a matter of class struggle. It is a struggle between Caste-Hindus and the Untouchables. This is not a matter of doing injustice against one man. This is a matter of injustice being done by one class against another. This class struggle has a relation with the social status. This struggle indicates how one class should keep its relations with another class. This struggle starts as soon as you start claiming equal treatment with others. Had it not been so, there would have been no struggle for the simple reason like serving the *chapatis*, wearing the super quality clothes, putting on the sacred thread, fetching the water in a metal pot, riding the bridegroom on the horse-back etc. In all these cases, you spend your own money. Why then the high caste Hindus get irritated? The reason for their anger is very simple, your behaving on par with them insults them. Your status in their eyes is low, you are impure, you must remain at the lowest rung, then alone, they will allow you to live happily. The moment you cross your level, the struggle starts. The instances given above also prove one more fact that the Untouchability is not a short or temporary feature, it is a permanent one. To put it straight, it can be said that the struggle between the Caste Hindus and the Untouchables is a permanent phenomena. It is eternal, because the religion which has placed you at the lowest level of the society is itself eternal, according to the belief of the High Caste people. No change, according to times and circumstances is possible. You are at the lowest rung of the ladder today. You shall remain lowest forever. This means, the struggle between the Hindus and the Untouchables shall continue forever. How will you survive through this struggle is the main question. And

unless you think over it, there is no way out. Those who desire to live in obedience to the dictates of the Hindus, those who wish to remain their slaves, they do not need to think over this problem. But those who wish to live a life of self-respect and equality, will have to think over this. How should we survive through this struggle ? For me, it is not difficult to answer this question. Those who have assembled here will have to agree that in any struggle, one who holds strength becomes the victor. One who has no strength, need not expect success. This has been proved by experience, and I do not need to cite illustration to prove it.

Achieve the power first

The question which you must now consider is, whether you have enough power to survive through this struggle ? Three types of strength are known to man. (1) Man-power, (2) Wealth, and (3) Mental strength. Which of these, you think that you possess ? So far as man-power is concerned, it is clear, that you are in a minority. In Bombay Presidency, the Untouchables are only one eighth of the total population, that too unorganised. The castes within themselves do not allow them to organise. They are not even compact but scattered through the villages. Due to these reasons, this meagre population is of no use as a fighting force for the critical dwelling place of the Untouchables. Financial strength is also just the same. It is an undisputed fact that you at least have a little bit of man-power, but finances, you have none. You have no trades, no business, no service, no land. The pieces of bread thrown out by the higher castes, are your means of livelihood. You have no food, no clothes. What financial strength can you have ? You have no capacity to get redress from the law courts if injustice done to you. Thousands of the Untouchables tolerate insult, tyranny and oppression at the hands of the Hindus without a sigh of complaint, because they have no capacity to bear the expenses of the Courts. As regards mental strength, the condition is still worst. For centuries, you have not only served the higher caste but also tolerated their insults and tyranny without grudge and complaint, which has killed the sense to retort and revolt. Confidence, vigour and ambition have completely vanished from you. All of you have become helpless, unenergetic

and pale. Everywhere, there is an atmosphere of defeatism and pessimism. Even the slightest idea that you can do something, does not arise in any body's mind.

Why are you only oppressed ?

If the fact that I have described above is true, then you will have to agree with the conclusion of it. The conclusion is, if you depend only upon your own strength, you will never be able to face the oppression. I have no doubt that you are oppressed because you have no strength. It is not that you alone are in minority. The Muslims are equally small in number. Like Mahar-Mangs, they too have few houses in the village. But no one dares to trouble the Muslims while you are always a victim of tyranny. Why is this so ? Though there may be two houses of Muslims in the village, nobody dares to harm them, while the whole village practise tyranny against you though you have about ten houses ? Why does this happen ? This is a very permanent question and you will have to find out a suitable answer to this. In my opinion, there is only one answer to this question. The Hindus realize that the strength of the whole of the Muslim population in India stands behind those two houses of Muslims living in a village and therefore they do not dare to touch them. Those two houses also, enjoy free and fearless life because they are aware that if any Hindu commits aggression against them, the whole Muslim community from Punjab to Madras will rush to their protection at any cost. On the other hand, the Hindus are sure that none will come to your rescue, nobody will help you, no financial help will reach you, nor will the officers help you in any eventuality. Tahsildar and Police belong to Caste Hindus, and in cases of disputes between Hindus and the Untouchables, they are more faithful to their caste than towards their duty. The Hindus practise injustice and tyranny against you only because you are helpless. From the above discussion, two facts are established. Firstly, you cannot face tyranny without strength. And secondly, you do not possess enough strength to face the tyranny. Having these two facts proved, the third automatically follows. That is, the strength required to face this tyranny needs to be secured from outside. How are you to gain this strength is really an important question, and you will have to ponder over this with an unbiased mind.

Strength needs to be brought from outside

The casteism and religious fanaticism in this country, as I see it, had a very peculiar effect on the minds and morality of the people. In this country, nobody seems to be pained by the poverty and sufferings of the people. And if at all anybody is pained, he does not try to eradicate it. People come to the help of those in poverty, sorrow and suffering but only amongst one's own caste or religion. Though this is a perverted sense of morality, it cannot be forgotten that it is prevalent in this country. In the villages the Untouchables suffer at the hands of the Hindus, it does not mean that there are no men of other religions and that they do not realise that the maltreatment to the Untouchables is unjust, or that the oppression of the Untouchables by the Hindus is most unjustified, but they do not come to the rescue of the Untouchables. What is the reason behind it ? If you ask them, why do they not help you, they reply that it is not their business to interfere and that had you been members of their religion, they would have helped you. From this you will realise one thing that, unless you establish close relations with some other society, unless you join some other religion, you cannot get the strength from outside. It clearly means, you must leave your present religion and assimilate yourselves with some other society. Without that, you cannot gain the strength of that society. So long as you do not have strength, you and your future generations will have to lead your lives in the same pitiable condition.

Spiritual aspects of conversion

Uptilnow, we have discussed why the conversion is necessary for material gains. Now I propose to put forth my thoughts as to why the conversion is much necessary for spiritual well-being. What is Religion for ? Why is it necessary ? Let us try to understand it. You will find that several people have defined religion in a various ways. But amongst all of these definitions, only one is most meaningful and agreeable to all. ' That which governs people is Religion '. This is the true definition of Religion. This is not my definition. Mr. Tilak, the foremost leader of the *Sanatani* Hindus himself is the author of this definition. So nobody can accuse me of having interpolated the

definition of religion. Though I have not defined it, it is not that I have accepted it merely for argument's sake. I accept it. Religion means the rules imposed for the maintenance of society. I also have the same concept of religion. Although this definition realistically or logically appears to be correct, it does not disclose or clarify the nature of rules which govern a society. The question still remains as to what should be the nature of rules which govern society. This question is more important than that of definition. Because the question which is religion and which is not religion, does not depend on its definition but on the motive and nature of the rules that bind and govern a society. What should be the nature of real religion? While deciding this question; another question naturally follows. What should be the relation between a man and society. The modern social philosophers have postulated three answers to this question. Some have said that the ultimate goal of society is to achieve happiness for the individual. Some say the society exists for development of the inherent qualities and energies of man and help him to develop his self. However some claim that the chief object of social organisation is not the development or happiness of the individual but the creation of an ideal society. The concept of Hindu religion is, however, very different from all these concepts. There is no place for an individual in Hindu religion. The Hindu religion is constituted on a class-concept. Hindu religion does not teach how an individual should behave with another individual. A religion which does not recognise the individual is not personally acceptable to me. Although society is necessary for the individual, mere social welfare cannot be the ultimate goal of religion. According to me, individual welfare and progress (individual development) should be the real aim of the religion. Although the individual is a part of the society, the relation with society is not like the body and its organs, or the cart and its wheels.

Society and the Individual

Unlike the drop of water that merges its existence with the ocean in which it drops, man does not lose his entity in the society in which he lives. Man's life is independent. He is born not for

the service of the society but for his self development. For this reason alone, in developed countries one man cannot enslave another. A religion in which an individual has no importance is not acceptable to me. The Hinduism does not recognise the importance of an individual, and therefore it is not acceptable to me. I do not accept a religion in which one class alone has a right to gain knowledge, another has only a right to use arms, the third one to trade and the fourth, only to serve. Everyone needs knowledge. Everybody needs arms. Everyone wants money. The religion, which forgets this, and with an intention to educate a few, keeps the rest in darkness, is not a religion but a conspiracy to keep the people in mental slavery. A religion which permits one to bear the arms and prohibits the other from doing so, is not a religion but a craftiness to keep the latter in perpetual slavery. A religion which opens the path to the acquisition of property for some and compels others to depend on these few even for the daily necessities of life, is not a religion but sheer self aggrandisement. This is what is called the *Chaturvarna* in Hinduism. I have clearly stated my views about it. It is for you now to think whether this Hinduism is beneficial to you. The basic idea underlying a religion is to create an atmosphere for the spiritual development of an individual. If this is agreed upon, it is clear that you cannot develop yourself at all in the Hinduism. Three factors are required for the uplift of an individual. They are : Sympathy, Equality and Liberty. Can you say by experience that any of these factors exists for you in the Hinduism ?

Is there any sympathy for you in Hinduism ?

So far as sympathy is concerned, it does not exist. Wherever you go, nobody looks at you sympathetically. You all have good experience of it. The Hindus have no sense of brotherhood towards you. You are treated worse than foreigners. If one looks at the relations of the neighbouring Hindus and the Untouchables of a village, none can say that they are brothers. They can rather be described as two opposing armies at warcamp. The Hindus do not have the slightest affinity towards you as they have towards Muslims. They consider Muslims closer to them than you. The Hindus and the Muslims are helpful to each other in

local boards, legislative councils and in business. But is there a single instance of such sympathetic consideration being shown towards you by the Caste Hindus ? On the contrary, they always cultivate hatred against you in their minds. What dreadful effects this hatred has produced can be heard from those who have had an occasion to go to the Court for justice, or to the police for help. Does anyone of you believe that the court will give you justice or the police act rightly ? And if not, what is the reason for cultivating such sense of hatred against you ? In my opinion, there is only one reason for such disbelief. You believe that the Hindus will not use their power rightly because they lack sympathy for you. And if it is so, what is the use of living in the midst of such hatred ?

Is there equality for you in Hinduism ?

In fact, this question should not be asked. The Untouchability is nothing but concrete inequality. Such a living example of inequality is to be found nowhere. Not at any time in the History of world can we find such inequality, which is more intense than the Untouchability. On account of a superiority-inferiority complex, one cannot offer his daughter to another in marriage or one cannot dine with the other. Such examples of inequality are usual. But is there a system existing anywhere in the world except in the Hindu religion and the Hindu society where a man is treated so low as not to touch another man ? Can anybody believe that there exists an animal called man by whose touch man becomes impure, water is polluted, and God becomes unworthy for worship ? Is there any difference between the treatment meted out to an Untouchable and a leper ? Though people feel nauseated thinking of a leper, they at least have sympathy for him. But people have nausea as well as hatred against you. Your condition is worse than the leper. Even today, if anyone hears words coming from the mouth of a Mahar, at the time of breaking a fast, he will not touch his food. Such a filth is attached to your body and your words. Some people say that the Untouchability is a stigma on Hindu religion. This statement, however, does not convey any sense at all. No Hindu believes

that the Hindu religion is a stigma. The majority of Hindus, however, believe that you are a stigma, that you are impure. How have you been brought to this condition ? I think, you have been thrust into this condition because you have continued to be Hindus. Those of you who have become Muslims are treated by the Hindus neither as the Untouchables nor as the unequals. The same can be said of those of you who have become Christians are treated by the Hindus neither as the Untouchables nor as the unequals. An incident that recently occurred in Travancore is worth mentioning. The Untouchables called Thiya in that area are prohibited from walking in the streets. Few days ago, some of these Untouchables embraced the Sikh religion. All of a sudden, the ban prohibiting them from walking in the street was withdrawn. All these things prove that if there is any reason of you being treated as the Untouchables and the unequals, is your relation with the Hindu religion.

In such a state of inequality and injustice, some Hindus try to soothe the Untouchables. They say, 'Get educated yourselves, be clean, and then we will touch you, we will treat you as equals.' In fact, we all know by experience, that the condition of educated, moneyed and clean Mahar is as bad as that of an uneducated, poor and dirty one. Let us ponder for the time being and consider, that if one is not respected because he is uneducated, poor, and not well-dressed, what should a common Mahar do ? How can one secure equality when one cannot gain education, have property or be highly dressed ? The Principle of equality as taught in Christianity and Islam has no concern whatsoever with knowledge, wealth, or dress which are outward aspects of oneself. Both these religions consider a sense of humanity as the main feature of their religion. They preach that humanity should be respected by all and none should disrespect others, none should treat others as unequals. These teachings are completely wanting in the Hindu religion. What is the use of such a religion in which the man's sense of humanity is not respected ? And what is the good of clinging to it ? In reply to this, some Hindus cite the *Upanishadas* and proudly say that God is all-pervading according to the principle enunciated in the *Upanishdas*. It may be pointed

out here that Religion and Science are two different things. It is necessary to consider whether a particular theory is a principle of science or the teaching of religion. That God is all-prevading is a principle of science and not of religion, because religion has a direct relation with the behaviour of man. The principle of God being omnipresent is not teaching of religion, but a principle of science. This statement is supported by the fact that the Hindus do not act according to the above principle. On the contrary, if the Hindus insist on saying that the omnipresence of God is not the principle of Philosophy but the basic Principle of their religion, I would simply say that nowhere in the world is such a meanness found as it exists among the Hindus. The Hindus can be ranked among those cruel people whose utterances and acts are two poles apart. They have this Ram on their tongue and a knife under their armpits. They speak like saints and act as butchers. Do not keep company with those who believe that the God is omnipresent, but treat men worse than animals, they are hypocrites. Do not keep contact with those who feed ants with sugar but kill men by prohibiting them from drinking water, they are hypocrites. You are unable to imagine what bad effects their company has left on you. You have ceased to be respected. You have no status at all. To say that the Hindus alone do not pay you any respect is inadequate. Not only the Hindus but the Muslims and the Christians also consider you the lowest of the lowly. In fact, the teachings of Islam and Christianity do not create the sense of high and low. Then why do the followers of these two religions treat you as low ? The reason is only one that the Hindus consider you as lowest of the low, so the Muslims and the Christians also consider you likewise. They fear that if they treat you as equals, the Hindus will treat them also as low. Hence, Muslims and Christians also follow the Untouchability like Hindus. Thus, we are not low in the eyes of the Hindus alone, but we are the lowest in the whole of India, because of the treatment given to us by the Hindus. If you have to get rid of this shameful condition, if you have to cleanse this stigma and make this precious life graceful, there is only one way and that is to discard the Hindu religion and the Hindu Society.

Have you any freedom in Hindu religion ?

Some people might say that you have a freedom of trade guaranteed by law like any other citizen. You are also said to have got the personal liberty like others. You will have to think deeply over such statement to see whether they really carry any meaning. What is good in saying, you have freedom of trade to a person who is not allowed by the society to do any other business rather than an ancestral one. What is the use of telling someone such words, you are at liberty to enjoy your property, nobody else will touch your money, when all doors of acquiring property are closed to him. To tell a person, who is treated as unfit for entry into any service due to the defilement attached to him by birth, and under whom working is most contemptuous for others, that he has a right to serve, is to make mockery of him. The Law may guarantee various rights, but only those can be called real rights which you are permitted by the society to exercise. The Law guarantees to the Untouchables the right to wear decent clothes but the Hindus do not allow them to put on these clothes, what is the use of this right ? The law guarantees to the Untouchables the right to fetch water in metal pots, the right to use the metallic utensils, the right to put tiles on their houses but the Hindu Society does not allow them to exercise these rights, what is the use of such rights ? The various instances of such violations can be cited. In short, that which is permitted by the society to be exercised can alone be called a right. The right which is guaranteed by law but is opposed by the society is of no use at all. The Untouchables are in more need of social liberty than that which is guaranteed by law. So long as you do not achieve social liberty, whatever freedom is provided by law to you, is of no avail. Some persons might advise you that you have physical freedom. Of course, you can go anywhere, can speak anything you wish, subject to the restrictions imposed by law. But what is the use of such freedom ? A man has a body as well as a mind. Mere physical freedom is of no use. Freedom of the mind is of prime importance. Really speaking, what is meant by the physical freedom to a man ? It means, he is free to act according to his own free will. A prisoner is unchained and made free. What is the principle underlying this ? The principle is that he should be free to act according to his own free will and he should be able

to make the maximum use of the abilities he possesses. But what is the use of such freedom of a man whose mind is not free ? The freedom of mind is the real freedom. A person whose mind is not free, though not in chains, is a slave. One whose mind is not free, though not in prison, is a prisoner. One whose mind is not free, though alive, is dead. Freedom of mind is proof of one's existence. What is the proof, then to judge, that the flame of mental freedom is not extinguished from a person ? Of whom can we say that his mind is free ? I call him free, who with an awakened consciousness realises his rights, responsibilities and duties, he who is not a slave of circumstances, and is always bent upon changing them in his favour, I call him free. One who is not a slave of usage, customs and traditions, or of teachings because they have come down from his ancestors, whose flame of reason is not extinguished, I call him a free man. He, who has not surrendered himself, who does not act on the teachings of others, who does not believe in anything unless it is examined critically in the light of the cause and effect theory, is a free man. Who is always prepared to protect his rights, who is not afraid of public criticism, who has enough intellect and self-respect so as not to become a tool in the hands of others, I call such a man as a free man. He, who does not lead his life under the directions of others, who carves out his own aim of life according to his own reasoning and decides for himself as to how, and in what way his life should be led, I call him a free man. In short, a man who is his own master, him alone, I consider a free man.

In the light of the above observations are you free ? Have you any freedom to carve your own aims ? In my opinion, not only you have any freedom but you are worse than slaves. Your slavery has no parallel. In the Hindu religion, none can have freedom of speech. Everyone who lives in Hindu religion must surrender his freedom of speech. He must act according to the *Vedas*. If the *Vedas* do not support the actions, instructions must be sought from the *Smritis*, and if the *Smritis* fail to provide any instructions, he must follow the footsteps of great men. In Hinduism, conscience, reason, thoughts have neither any importance nor any scope. A Hindu must necessarily be a slave of either the *Vedas* or the *Smritis* or must imitate the great men. He is not supposed to use his reasoning. Hence, so long as you are a

part of the Hindu religion, you cannot expect to have freedom of thought. Some people might argue that the Hindu religion did not force you alone into mental slavery, but has snatched away the freedom of mind of all other communities. It is quite true that all the Hindus are living under a state of mental slavery. But from this nobody should conclude that the sufferings of all are alike. Everyone in the Hindu religion is not equally affected by the adverse effects that this mental slavery has produced. This mental slavery is in no way detrimental to the material happiness of the Caste Hindus. Though the Caste-Hindus are slaves of the above-mentioned trio *viz. Vedas, Smritis* and the Great men, they are given a high position in the Hindu Social System. They are empowered to rule over others. It is an undisputed fact that the whole of the Hindu religion is the creation of the high Caste Hindus for the welfare and prosperity of the high-castes. To which they call a religion, has assigned you a role of the slave. Every arrangement is made in the religion itself, so that you may not be able to escape from this slavery. Therefore, to you there is more need of breaking the bondage of mental slavery of the Hindu religion, so far the Hindus do not need. In view of this, the Hinduism has marred your progress from two sides. It has sacked your mental freedom and made you slaves. In the outer world also, it has doomed you to the conditions of a slave. If you want freedom, you must change your religion.

Untouchables' organisations and conversion

The present movement of eradication of the Untouchability has been criticised on the ground that the various castes in the Untouchable class practise casteism in their mutual dealings; ney they practise Untouchability. Mahars and Mangs do not dine together. Both these castes do not touch the scavengers and practice Untouchability against them. What right these people have to expect from the High Castes the non-observance of Untouchability, when they themselves practise casteism and Untouchability amongst themselves ? This question is always raised. The Untouchables are generally advised to abolish castes and Untouchability from amongst them and then come up for redress. We all have to accept that there is a truth in this argument.

But the allegation made in this is false. It cannot be denied that the castes included in the Untouchables practise casteism and some the Untouchability. But it is equally false to say that they are any way responsible for this crime. The Casteism and the Untouchability have originated not from the Untouchables but from the high-Caste Hindus. They have laid down the practice of the casteism and the Untouchability. The lesson of observing the casteism and the Untouchability has been put in the practice by the high Caste Hindus. And if this is true, the responsibility of this tradition of the casteism and the Untouchability falls on the Caste Hindus and not on the Untouchables. If this lesson is false, the burden of its being untruthful falls on those who taught it, and not on those who learnt it. Though this reply appears to be correct, it does not satisfy me. Though we are not responsible for the cause due to which castes and Untouchability has taken root among us, it will be good not to condemn it and allow it to continue as it is. Although we are not responsible for the introduction of the Untouchability and the castes among us, it is our responsibility to annihilate it. And I am glad that all of us have realised this responsibility. I am sure there is no leader among the Mahars who advocate the practice of the casteism. If comparison is to be made, it will have to be made among the leaders. If we compare the educated class of the Mahar community with that of the Brahmins and one will have to admit that the educated class from the Untouchables is more eager to abolish castes. This can well be proved by deeds also. Not only the educated class of Mahars but even the uneducated and illiterate Mahars are the protagonists of abolition of castes. This also can be proved. Today, there is not a single person in the Mahar community who is opposed to the inter-caste dinning among the Mahars and the Mangs. I feel greatly satisfied that you have realised the necessity of abolition of castes, for which I extend my the heartiest congratulations. But have you ever thought as to how the efforts towards abolition of castes in the Untouchables can be made successful? Castes cannot be abolished by inter-caste dinners or stray instances of inter-caste marriages. The Caste is a state of mind. It is a disease of the mind. The teachings of the Hindu religion are the root cause of this disease. We practise the casteism, we observe the Untouchability, because we are asked to do so by the Hindu religion

in which we live. A bitter thing can be made sweet. The taste of salty and astringent things can be changed. But the poison cannot be made nectar (*Amrit*!) To talk of annihilating castes while living in the Hinduism is like talking of changing the poison into nectar (*Amrit*).

In short, so long as we remain in the religion which teaches a man to treat other man as filthy, the sense of discrimination on account of caste which is deeply rooted in our minds, cannot be abolished. For annihilating the castes and the Untouchability from among the Untouchables, change of religion is the only antidote.

'Change in name' and 'Change in religion'

So far, I have placed before you the points in favour of the conversion. I hope, this analysis will be thought provoking for you. For those who consider this discussion profound, I propose to put it before you in simple thoughts and in simple language. What is there in the conversion, which can be called novel? Really speaking, what sort of social relations have you with the Caste Hindus? You are as separate from the Hindus as Muslims and Christians are. As Hindus do not have inter-dinings and inter-marriages with Muslims and Christians, so is their relation with you. Your society and that of the Hindus are two distinct groups. By the conversion, nobody can say or feel that one society has been split up. You will remain as separate from the Hindus as you are today. Nothing new will happen on account of this conversion. If this is true, then I do not understand why some people should be afraid of the conversion. Though you have not understood the importance of change of religion, you have undoubtedly understood the importance of a change of name. If any one from amongst you, is asked about his caste, he replies as being Chokhamela, Harijan etc. But he does not say that he is a Mahar. Nobody can change his name unless certain conditions demand it. There is a very simple reason for such a change of name. An unknown person cannot distinguish between the touchable and an Untouchable and so long as a Hindu does not come to know the caste of a person, he cannot bear in him hatred towards that person for being an Untouchable. The caste Hindus and the Untouchables behave in a very friendly fashion during a journey

as long as they are unaware of their castes. They exchange betels, bidis, cigarettes, fruits etc. But as soon as the Hindu comes to know that the person with whom he is talking is an Untouchable, a sense of hatred germinates in his mind. He thinks that he has been deceived. He gets angry and ultimately this temporary friendship ends in abuses and quarrels. I am sure that you have gone through such experiences. You must be knowing why this happens. The names that depict your caste are considered so filthy that even their utterance is enough to create a vomiting sensation in the heart of Hindus. Thus, by calling yourself a Chokhamela instead of a Mahar, you try to deceive people. But, you know, people are not deceived. Whether you call yourself a Chokhamela or a Harijan, people understand what you are. By your actions, you have proved, the necessity of a change in name. Then I would like to ask you, if you feel the need of change in your name, what objection should there be for the change of religion ? Changing a religion is like changing a name. Change of a religion followed by the change of name will be more beneficial to you. To call oneself a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist or a Sikh is not merely a change of religion but is also a change of name. That is a real change of name. This new name will have no filth attached to it. It is a drastic change. None will search the origin of it. The change of name as Chokhamela, Harijan has no meaning at all. In this case, all the hatred, contempt etc. attached to the original name passes on to the new name. So long as you remain in the Hindu religion, you will have to change your name. To call oneself a Hindu is not enough. Nobody recognises that there is anyone called a Hindu. So also, by calling oneself a Mahar, will not serve the purpose. As soon as you utter this name, nobody will come near to you. Instead of changing one name today and another tomorrow, and thus remaining in a state of pendulum, I ask you, therefore, why you should not change your name permanently by changing your religion.

The role of opponents

Since the beginning of this movement of conversion, many people have raised many objections to it. Let us now examine the truth, if any, in such objections. Some Hindus, pretending to be religious, advise you saying, "A religion is not a matter of

enjoyment. A religion cannot be changed as we change our clothes every day. You wish to leave this Hindu religion and embrace another one. Do you then think that your ancestors who clung to this religion for a long period were fools ?" Some so called wise men have raised this question. I do not find any substance in this objection. A foolish alone will say that one has to adhere to ones religion because it is that of his ancestors. No wise man will accept such a proposition. Those who argue that the ancestral religion should not be changed, seem that they have not read the history at all. The ancient Aryan religion was called *Vedic Religion*, in which three distinct characteristics—beef eating, drinking and merry-making—were the part of the religion of the day. Thousands of people followed it in India and even now some Brahmins dream of going back to it. If the ancient religion alone is to be adhered to why did the people of India renounce the Hinduism and accept the Buddhism ? Why did they renounce the *Vedic* religion and accept the Jain religion ? It cannot be denied that our ancestors lived in the ancient religion, but I cannot say that they remained there voluntarily. The *Chaturvarna* System prevailed in this country for a fairly long time. In this System, the *Brahmins* were permitted to learn, *Kshatriyas* to fight, *Vaishyas* to earn property and the *Shudras* to serve; this way of life was the rule of the day. In this way of life, the *Shudras* had no education, no property and no arms. Those your ancestors who were thus forced to live in impoverish and defenceless conditions, no man with sense will say that they accepted this religion voluntarily. Here it is also necessary to consider whether it was possible for your ancestors to revolt against this religion. Had it been possible for them to revolt and they had still not acted upon, then only we could have said that they had accepted this Religion voluntarily. But if we look into the real conditions, it will be clear to us that our ancestors were compelled to live in that religion. Thus this Hindu Religion is not the Religion of our ancestors, but it was slavery thrust upon them. Our ancestors had no means to fight this slavery and hence they could not revolt. They were compelled to

live in this Religion. Nobody can blame them for this helplessness. Rather anyone will pity them. But now nobody can force any type of slavery upon the present generation. They have all sorts of freedom. By availing of such freedom, if they do not free themselves, one will have to call them, most regretfully, as being most mean, slavish and dependent people to have lived on earth.

Difference between man and animal

It is fitted for a fool only to say that one should cling to ones own Religion only because it is ancestral. No wise person can have such an argument. This will be a worthy advice for animals, and not for man to tell him, to live in the same circumstances in which he is living. The difference between a man and an animal is that—a man can make progress while an animal cannot. Our progress is not possible without change. The Conversion is a sort of change. And if no progress is possible without the conversion, the conversion becomes essential. The only being a matter of ancestral religion can never occur as a hindrance in the path of a progressive man.

There is still one more argument against the Conversion. It is, 'the Conversion is a sort of escapism.' Today, a number of Hindus are bent upon improving the Hindu Religion. They claim that the Untouchability and the casteism can be eradicated with the help of these people. It is, therefore, not proper to change the Religion at this juncture. Whatever opinion anybody may possess about the Hindu Social Reformers, I personally have a nausea for them. I have much experience of them and I feel disgust about these half-witted people. It is really astonishing that those people, who want to live in their own caste, die in their own caste, marry in their own caste, are able to fool people with false slogans, like saying they will break the caste and if the Untouchables do not believe them, they get annoyed with them. When I hear such slogans shouted by these Hindu Social Reformers, I recollect the efforts made by the American white people for the emancipation of the American Negroes. Years ago, the condition of the Negroes in

America was just the same as those of the Untouchables in India. The difference between the two was that the slavery of Negroes had the sanction of the Law while your slavery is a creation of the Religion. Some American reformers were trying for the abolition of slavery of the Negroes. But can the Hindu Social Reformers be compared with those White Social Reformers in America, who emancipated the Negroes ? The White American Reformers fought battles in war with kith and kin for the emancipation of the Negroes. They killed thousands of Whites who defended the slavery, and also sacrificed their own blood for this cause. When we read these incidents through the pages of history, we are compelled to say that, the social reformers in America and in India are incomparable. (कहाँ राजा कहाँ पोतराजा) These so called benefactors of the Untouchables of India called reformers need to be asked— Are you prepared to fight a Civil war with your Hindu Brethren like the Whites in America who fought with their white brothers for the cause of the Negroes ? And if not, what are these tall talks of reforms for ? The greatest of the Hindus who claims to fight for the cause of the Untouchables is Mahatma Gandhi. To what extent can he go? Mahatma Gandhi who pilots the non-violent agitation against the British Government is not prepared even to hurt the feelings of the Hindus, the oppressors of the Untouchables. He is not willing to launch a *Satyagrah* against them. He is not even prepared to take legal action against the Hindus. I do not see any good of such reformers.

The fault lies with the touchables alone

Some Hindus attend the meetings of the Untouchables and rebuke the Caste Hindus. Some will advise the Untouchables from their stage saying, "Brothers, live clean, educate yourselves, stand on your own feet, etc." Really speaking, if anybody is to be blamed, it is the Caste Hindus alone. It is the Caste Hindus who commit this wrong. Yet none will try to gather these Caste Hindus and reprimand them. To those who preach to the Untouchables to continue their agitation with the help of the Hindus and by remaining in the Hindu fold, I would like to remind

them of a couple of illustrations from history. I remember to have read about a conversation between an American and an English soldier during the last World War. I find it most appropriate at this juncture. For how long the war should be continued, was the subject of their discussion. In reply to a question of the American, the Englishman said with great pride, "We shall fight the war till the last Frenchman is killed". When the Hindu Social Reformers proclaim that they shall fight to the last for the cause of the Untouchables, it means that they propose to fight till the last Untouchable dies. This is the meaning as I understand of their proclamation. It should not be difficult for you to decide that one who fights for the cause at the cost of the lives of others cannot be expected to win the battle. If we are to die in our struggle for freedom, what is the use of fighting at wrong place ? To reform the Hindu Society is neither our aim nor our field of action. Our aim is to gain freedom for us. We have nothing to do with anything else. If we can gain our freedom by the Conversion, why should we shoulder the responsibility of reforming the Hindu Society ? And why should we sacrifice our vitality, strength and wealth for that ? None should misunderstand the main object of our movement as being Hindu Social Reform. The principal object of our movement is only to achieve the social freedom for the Untouchables; it is equally true that this freedom cannot be secured without conversion. I do accept that the Untouchables need equality as well and to secure equality is also one of the objectives of our movement. But nobody can say that this equality can be achieved only by remaining in Hindu religion otherwise equality will not be achieved. Before me, there are two ways of achieving the equality. The equality will be achieved either by remaining in the Hindu fold or by the conversion. If the equality is to be achieved by remaining in the Hindu fold, mere removal of the polluting contact will not serve the purpose. The equality can be achieved only when intercaste dinners and marriages take place. This means that the *Chaturvarna* must be abolished and the Brahminic Religion must be uprooted. Is it possible ? And if not, will it be wise to expect the treatment of equality by remaining in the Hindu religion ? And can you be successful in

your efforts ? Comparatively the path of Conversion is far easy. The Hindu Society gives equal treatment to the Muslims. The Hindu Society gives equal treatment to the Christians. Obviously, the social equality is easily achieved by the conversion. If this is true, then why should you not adopt this simple path of Conversion ? According to me, this Conversion of Religion will bring happiness to both—the Untouchables as well as Hindus. So long as you remain as Hindus, you will have to struggle for polluting contacts, for food and water, and for intercaste marriages. And so long as this quarrel continues, you and the Hindu will be the perpetual enemies to each other. By the conversion, the roots of all the quarrels will vanish. Then you will have no right to claim on their temples as well there will be no need for the same. There will be no reason for you to struggle for social rights such as intercaste dinning, intercaste marriages etc; and if these quarrels cease to exist, mutual love and affection will develop among you. Look at the present relations between the Hindus on one hand and the Christians and the Muslims on the other. The Hindus do not allow the Muslims and the Christians to enter their temples, like you. They also have no intercaste marriages or inter dining with them. Irrespective of this, the affinity and love which these people have, is not in between you and the Hindus. The main reason for this difference is that, as you live in the Hindu religion, you have to struggle with the Hindu Society for the social and the religious rights. But the Muslims and the Christians, having gone out of the Hindu religion, do not need to struggle with the Hindus for the religious and the social rights. Secondly, although they have no social rights in the Hindu Society, namely, they have no inter-dining and inter-marriage with the Hindus, the Hindus do not treat them inequals. Thus by conversion, if the equality can be achieved and the affinity between the Hindus and the Untouchables can be brought about, then why should the Untouchables not adopt this simple and happy path of securing equality ? Looking at the problem through this angle, the conversion is the only right path of freedom which ultimately leads to equality. The Conversion is not the path of escapism. It is not the path of cowardice, it is the path of wisdom.

One more argument is put forth against the conversion. Some Hindus argue that the conversion is worthless if you do it out of frustration from the caste system. The Hindus plead that wherever you go, there is a casteism. If you become Muslim; there is a casteism. If you become Christian there is also a casteism. Unfortunately, it has to be admitted that the Caste System has crept into other religions in this country also. But the burden of nurturing this great sin lies with the Hindus alone. This disease originally sprang up from the Hindus and thereafter infected others. In their view they are helpless for this. Although the castes exist in the Muslims and the Christians alike, it will be meanness to liken it to that of the Hindus. There is a great distinction between the caste system of the Hindus and that of the Muslims and the Christians. Firstly, it must be noted that though there is a casteism among the Christians and the Muslims, nobody can say that it is the chief characteristic of their social system. If one asks, 'who are you?' the reply 'I am a Muslim' or, 'I am a Christian' is enough to satisfy. Nobody feels the necessity of asking as to what his caste is. But if any Hindu is asked, 'Who are you?' and he says, 'I am a Hindu', one is not satisfied with this reply. He is further asked, 'What is your caste?' And unless this is replied to, none can have the idea of his social status. From this it is evident as to how the caste has prime importance in the Hindu religion and how negligible it is in the Christianity and the Islam. There is one more difference between the caste system of the Hindus and that of the Muslims and the Christians. The caste system in the Hindus has the foundation of the Hindu Religion. The castes in Muslims and Christian religions have no sanction in their religion. If the Hindus proclaim to disband the caste system, their religion will come in their way. On the other hand, if the Muslims and the Christians start movements for abolishing the caste system in their society, their religion will not obstruct this. The Hindus cannot destroy their castes without destroying their religion. The Muslims and the Christians need not destroy their religions for eradication of the castes. Rather their religion will support such movements to great extent. Even for the sake of argument, it is admitted that castes exist everywhere it cannot be concluded that one should remain in the Hindu fold. If the Caste System is useless, then the logical conclusion is that one should

accept such a society in which the Caste System has no severity or wherein the castes can be abolished early and easily in a simple manner.

Some Hindus say, 'What will happen by the conversion alone ? Try to improve your financial and educational status.' Possibly some of our people will be confused and puzzled by such question. I therefore feel it necessary to discuss it here. Firstly, the question is, who is going to improve your financial and educational conditions ? You yourself or those who argue as above ? I do not think that those who advice you like this will be able to do anything except extending their lip sympathy. Nor do I find any efforts towards this direction from their side. On the contrary, every Hindu tries to improve the economic status of his own caste. His outlook is limited to his own caste alone. Brahmins are engaged in establishing maternity homes for Brahmin women, providing scholarships to Brahmin pupils, and for securing jobs for the unemployed Brahmins. Saraswats (one of the castes amongst the Brahmins) are also doing the same. Kayasthas and Marathas are doing the same. Everybody is for himself, and those who have no benefactor are at the mercy of God. You yourself have to rise, none else is to come to your aid, this is the present day condition of a society. If this is the situation, what is the purpose in listening to the advice of these people ? There is no other motive in such advice but to misguide you and kill your time. If you have to improve yourselves, then nobody need to pay any attention to that gossips of the Hindu people and they do not have any right to advice you. Although this may seem enough, I do not propose to leave this point here. I feel necessary to refute this argument.

I am simply surprised by the senseless question which some Hindus ask as to what will happen by the conversion alone ? Most of the present day Sikhs, Muslims and Christians in India were formerly Hindus, majority of them being from the *Shudras* and the Untouchables. Do these critics mean to say that those who renounced the Hindu fold and embraced Sikhism or Christianity, have made no progress at all ? And if this is not true, and if it is admitted that the conversion has brought a distinct improvement in their condition, then to say that the Untouchables will not be

benefitted by the conversion, carries no meaning; they have to think over this. Another implied meaning of the statement that 'nothing will happen by the conversion' means that 'the religion is meaningless.' I do not understand why they advocate and insist upon the Untouchables to remain in the Hindu religion when they argue that the religion is meaningless; there is neither gain nor loss. If they do not find any meaning in the religion, why should they unnecessarily argue for which religion is left and which is accepted? Those Hindus who ask as to what will happen by the conversion alone, can be accosted with the similar question— what can be achieved by self Government alone. If it is true that the people in India, like the Untouchables, feel the necessity of the financial and educational progress, what is the good of self Government. And if the country is to be benefitted by self Government alone, the Untouchables are also bound to be benefitted by the conversion. After giving a deep thought to this problem, everybody will have to admit that the conversion is necessary to the Untouchables as self Government is necessary to India. The conversion is as important to the Untouchables as is self Government to India. The ultimate object of both the conversion and the self Government is the same. There is not the slightest difference in their ultimate goal. This ultimate aim is to attain freedom. And if the freedom is necessary for the life of mankind, the conversion of Untouchables which brings them complete freedom cannot be called worthless by any stretch of imagination.

What first ? Progress or Conversion ?

I think it is necessary here to discuss the question as to what should be initiated first, whether economic progress or conversion? I do not agree with the view that economic progress should precede. This issue whether religious conversion or economic progress should precede is as dry as that which deals with political reform versus social reform. Several means are required to be applied for the development and progress of the society and each of these means has its own significance. No definite seriatim can be applied for the application of these means. If, however, anybody insists for such seriatim with regard to the conversion and economic reform, I will prefer conversion to economic reform.

I fail to understand how you can achieve economic progress so long as you have the stigma of being an Untouchable. If anyone of you open a shop and it is known that the shopkeeper is an Untouchable, nobody will purchase anything from you. If anyone of you apply for a job, and it is disclosed that the applicant is an Untouchable, you will not get the job. If anyone intends to sell his land, and one of you propose to purchase it, nobody will sell the land once it is known that the purchaser is an Untouchable. Whatever means you may use for the economic progress of your own efforts will be frustrated due to the Untouchability. The Untouchability is a permanent obstacle in your path of progress. And unless you remove it, your path cannot be smooth and without the conversion, this hurdle cannot be removed. Some of your young ones are trying to get education and they are collecting money for this purpose from whatever source they find proper. Due to this temptation of money, some are inclined to remain the Untouchables and make their progress. I wish to ask one question to these youngsters, after completion of your education, if you do not get the job suited to your qualifications, what will you do of your education ? What is the reason that most of our educated persons are unemployed today ? To me, the main cause for this unemployment is the Untouchability alone. Your virtues are not valued because of Untouchability. Your caliber has no scope due to your Untouchability. Because of the Untouchability, you have been ousted from the Military service. You are not employed in the Police Department on account of your Untouchability. Due to the Untouchability, you cannot secure even the post of a peon. You are not promoted to the higher rank only because you are an Untouchable. An Untouchability is a kind of curse. You have been completely ruined and all your virtues have turned into dust. Under these circumstances, what more qualifications can you acquire and even if you acquire, what is its use ? So if you sincerely desire that your qualifications should be valued, your education should be of some use to you, the doors of your financial progress are to be opened, you must throw away the shackles of the Untouchability.

Doubts against Conversion

The arguments put forth by the critics of conversion have been discussed so far. Now I propose to clarify the doubts expressed

by some of the sympathisers of conversion. In the first place, it has been heard that some of the Mahars are worried as to what will be the fate of their *Watan* (hereditary rights of a village servant). It has also been heard that the high caste Hindus opposing to the conversion have threatened the Mahars in the villages that they will be deprived of their services as village servants if they leave the Hindu religion. All of you are aware that I am least worried if the *Mahar Watan* is abolished. During the last ten years, I have been advocating that if there is anything that doomed the fate of Mahars is the *Mahar Watan* alone and the day on which you will be freed from these chains of *Maharki*, I will think your path of liberation is open to you. However, for those who want this *Mahar Watan*, I can assure them that their *Watan* will not be jeopardised by their conversion. In this regard, the act of 1850 can be referred. Under the provisions of this act, rights of a person as a successor and property are not affected by virtue of his conversion. Those who feel this reference of law as insufficient, they have to take into consideration the circumstances prevalent in Nagar District. A number of persons from the Mahar community in this District have become Christians and at some places, in one family, some are Christians, while others still remained as Mahars. However, the *Watan* rights of these converted Christians have not vanished. This may be confirmed from the Mahars of Nagar. So, none should fear that their *Watan* will come in peril by conversion.

A second doubt is about political rights. Some people express fear as to what will happen to our safeguards if we convert. Nobody can say that I do not realise the importance of the political safeguards that the Untouchables have achieved. Nobody else has taken so much pains and has made so much efforts for securing these political rights for the Untouchables as I have taken. But I feel, it is not proper to depend solely on political rights. These political safeguards are not granted on the condition that they shall be everlasting. They are bound to cease sometime. According to the Communal Award of the British Government, our political safeguards were limited for 20 years. Although no such limitation has been fixed by the Poona Pact, nobody can say they are

everlasting. Those who depend upon these political safeguards, must think as to what will happen after these safeguards are withdrawn. On the day on which our political rights cease to exist, we will have to depend upon our social strength. I have already told you that this social strength is wanting in us. So also I have proved in the beginning that this strength cannot be achieved without the conversion. None should think of the present only. To forget what is eternally beneficial and to be allured by the temporary gains, is bound to lead to suffering. Under these circumstances, one must think of what is permanently beneficial. In my opinion, the conversion is the only way to eternal bliss. Nobody should hesitate even if the political rights are required to be sacrificed for this purpose. The conversion brings no harm to the political safeguards. I do not understand why the political safeguards should at all be jeopardised by the conversion. Wherever you go, your political rights and safeguards will accompany you. I have no doubt about it. If you become Muslims, you will get the political rights as Muslims. If you become Christians, you will get your political rights as Christians, if you become Sikhs you will have your political safeguards as Sikhs. Political rights are based on population. The political safeguards of any society will increase with the increase of its population. Nobody should misunderstand that if we leave the Hindu Society, all the 15 seats allotted to us will go back to the Hindus. If we become Muslims, our 15 seats will be added to the seats reserved for the Muslims. Likewise, if we become Christians, our seats will be added to the seats reserved for the Christians. In short, our political rights will accompany us. So nobody should be afraid of it. On the other hand, you must think carefully on this that if we remain Hindus and do not convert, will our rights be safe? Suppose the Hindus pass a Law whereby the Untouchability is prohibited and its practice is made punishable, then they may ask you, 'we have abolished the Untouchability by law and you are no longer Untouchables.' You are simply poor and backward, like you other castes are equally backward. We have not provided any political safeguards for these other backward communities. Then why should you be given ? You will have to think deeply over what will be your reply to these questions. It will be very easy for the Muslims and the Christians to answer

this question. They will say, "We are not granted political safeguards and rights because we are poor, illiterate or backward, but because our religion is different, our society is different and so on. And so long as our religion is different, we must get our share in the political rights." This will be their appropriate reply. So long as you are living in the Hindu religion and in the Hindu society, you cannot take this stand that you are entitled for political safeguards because your society is different. You will be able to take this stand on the day on which you liberate yourselves from the serfdom of the Hindu society by virtue of conversion, otherwise not. And unless you take such independent stand and claim the political safeguards, your political rights and safeguards cannot be considered to be permanent and free from danger, I think it will be a matter of ignorance. Looking through this perspective, it can be said that the conversion is not a hindrance but a path for strengthening the political safeguards.

If you remain in the Hindu religion, you will lose your political safeguards. If you do not want to lose your political safeguards do conversion, they will be permanent only by the conversion.

Conclusion

For myself I have taken my decision. My conversion is sure. My conversion is not for any material gain. There is nothing which I cannot achieve by remaining as an Untouchable. Nothing but spirituality is at the base of my conversion. The Hindu religion does not appeal to my reason. The Hindu religion does not appeal to my self-respect. However, for you, for spiritual as well as for material gains the conversion is must. Some persons mock and laugh at the idea of the conversion for material gain. I do not feel hesitant in calling such persons as fool. A religion which preaches what will happen or what will not to soul after death, may be useful for the rich. They may entertain themselves by thinking over such religion at their own leisure. It is quite natural that those who have enjoyed all sort of pleasures in their lifetime, may consider such religion as a real religion, which mainly tells them the pleasures they are to get after death. But what of those who by remaining in a particular religion have been reduced

to the state of dust, who have been denied the basic necessities of life such as food and clothe, who have not been treated even as human beings, are these people instead of thinking of religion from a material point of view, expected to look at the sky by merely closing eyes ? What is the use of this rich and idle people's Vedanta to the poor ?

Religion is for man

I tell you specifically that man is not for religion, religion is for man. To become human, convert yourselves. To get organised, convert yourselves. To achieve strength, convert yourselves. To secure equality, convert yourselves. To get liberty, convert yourselves. To make your domestic life happy, convert yourselves.

Why do you remain in that religion which does not treat you as human beings ? Why do you remain in that religion which does not allow you to educate ? Why do you remain in that religion which prohibits you from entering a temple ? Why do you remain in that religion which prohibits you from water ? Why do you remain in that religion which obstructs you from getting a job ? Why do you remain in that religion, which insults you at every step ? A religion which prohibits righteous relations between man and man, is not a religion but a display of force. A religion which does not recognise a man as a human being, is not a religion but a disease. A religion which allows the touch of animals but prohibits the touch of human beings is not a religion but a mockery. A religion which precludes one class from education, forbids to accumulate wealth, to bear arms, is not a religion but a mockery of the life of human being. A religion that compels the illiterate to be illiterate, and the poor to be poor, is not a religion but a punishment.

I have tried here to the best of my knowledge to analyse and explain all the probable problems arising out of the conversion. This discourse might have become a lengthy one, but I had decided to elaborate it thoroughly right from the beginning. It was necessary for me to reply the points raised by the opponents about the conversion. I am of the opinion that nobody should convert without knowing importance of the declaration of conversion, and

hence I discuss this problem in such detail so that nobody should have any doubt about it.* I cannot say how far you will agree with my views, but I hope, you will deeply brood over them. I feel that to please the masses and gain the popularity is good for a common man but not for a leader. I consider one as a leader who without fear or favour without popular accusation tells the people what is good and what is bad for them. It is my duty to tell you, what is good for you, even if you don't like it. I must do my duty. And now I have done it. It is now up to you to decide and discharge your responsibility. I have divided this problem of the conversion into two parts. Whether to leave the Hindu religion or to remain in it is the first part of the problem. If the Hindu religion is to be abandoned, what other religion should be adopted or whether a new religion should be established, this is the second part of the problem. Today, I have to decide the first part of the problem, unless the first part is decided, it is futile to discuss or prepare for the latter. Therefore you must decide the first point. It will not be possible for me to give you another opportunity to decide this. What decision you take in this conference, accordingly I will chalk out my future programme. If you decide against the conversion, this question will be closed for ever. Then whatever is to be done for myself, I will do. If at all you decide in favour of the conversion, then you will have to promise me for an organised and enmasse conversion. If the decision is taken in favour of the conversion, and the people start embracing any religion they like individually, I will not intervene in your conversion. I wish you all to join me. Whatever religion we may accept, I am prepared to put all my sincere efforts and labour for the welfare of our people in that religion. You should not, however, be led away by emotion and follow me only because I say so. You should consent only if it appeals to your reason. I will not at all feel sorry if you decide not to join me. Rather I will feel relieved of the responsibility. You have to keep in mind that this is, therefore, a crucial occasion. Your today's decision will carve out a path for prosperity of your future generations. If you decide today to get liberated, your future generations will definately be liberated. If you decide to remain slaves, your future generations will also be slaves. Hence yours is the most difficult task.

Be thy own light

While thinking over what message should I give you on this occasion, I recollected the message given by the Lord Buddha to His *Bhikkhu Sangh* just before his *Mahaparinirvan* and which has been quoted in *Mahaparinibban Sutta*. Once the Bhagwan, after having recovered from illness was resting on a seat under a tree, His disciple venerable Ananda went to the Buddha, and having saluted sat beside Him, said, "I have seen the Lord in illness as well as in happiness. But from the present illness of the Lord, my body has become heavy like a lead, my mind is not in peace, I can't concentrate on the Dhamma, but I feel consolation and satisfaction that the Lord will not attain the *Parinibban* unless the message is given to the *Sangh*."

Then the Lord replied thus, "Ananda! What does the *Sangh* expect from me ? Ananda, I have preached the *Dhamma* with an open heart, without concealing anything. The Tathagata has not kept anything concealed as some other teachers do. So Ananda, what more can Tathagata tell the *Bhikkhu Sangh*. So Ananda, be self illuminating like the Sun. Don't be dependent for the light like the Earth. Believe in yourself, don't be dependent on others. Be truthful. Always take refuge in the truth and do not surrender to anybody."

I also take refuge in the words of the Buddha "Be your own guide. Take refuge in your own reason. Do not listen to the advice of others. Do not succumb to others. Be truthful. Take refuge in truth. Never surrender to anything. If you keep in mind this message of Lord Buddha at this juncture, I am sure, your decision will not be wrong."¹



¹ : Janata : dated 27th June, 1936.

Translated by : Vasant Moon and Editors.

... THERE WILL BE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MAHARS AND THE MANGS

Promises their Quota If they Join his Party for Elections

The Bombay Presidency Mang Conference was held on Tuesday the 2nd June 1936 at Naigaum, Dadar, about 5,000 members of the Mang community and delegates from the different districts of the Presidency attended the session.

The main resolution which was adopted unanimously stated that the Mang community had no other remedy but change of religion for obtaining freedom and equality. The resolution also declared that the Mang community had full trust in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and that it was prepared to follow him ' *enmasse* ' in his move for a change of faith. Other resolutions relating to the amelioration of the condition of the community were also unanimously adopted.

Dr. Ambedkar, who was present by special invitation, addressed the Conference for about an hour. At the outset he pointed out that he had chosen the moment for delivering the speech after the Mang community had declared its decision on the subject of change of faith especially because he did not want to influence their decision in the slightest degree. He demanded the existence of the evil of castes amongst the Depressed Classes themselves.

Hinduism to Blame

He said, however, that it was not an evil for which the Depressed Classes were responsible. It was Hinduism which was responsible for it. If the Mang community wanted to get out of the evil effects of the caste system, they had perforce to get out of that fold. He assured the Mang community as a member of the Mahar community, a majority community of the Depressed Classes in the Bombay Presidency, that if they chose to come with them there would be no distinction whatsoever between the Mahars and the Mangs. He further assured the Mang community that the Mahars were prepared to guarantee them their quota out of the 15 seats allotted to the Depressed Classes in the Bombay

Presidency provided they were prepared to abide by the pledges of the party.

In conclusion Dr. Ambedkar told the audience that the remedy of the change of religion he had placed before the Depressed Classes was in itself a gigantic scheme for the lowly to rise from their age-long degradation.—A. P.¹



¹: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 5th June 1936.

YOU MUST GIVE UP YOUR DISGRACEFUL PROFESSION

" An impassioned appeal to cast off the evil practices and customs among certain sections of the Depressed classes was made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at a meeting at Damodar Thakersey Hall, Bombay, on Tuesday the 16th June 1936, at night.

The meeting was largely attended by men and women belonging to the *Devdasi*, *Potraje*, *Bhute*, *Aradhi* and *Jogtini* sects and was held to accord support to the mass conversion move inaugurated at Yeola.

After several speakers, both men and women, had addressed the gathering on the need for a change of faith as a step toward social freedom, Dr. Ambedkar made a fervent appeal, especially to the women, most of whom had come from Kamathipura.

Dr. Ambedkar said,

" Whether you change your religion alongwith us or not, it does not matter much to me. But I insist that if you want to be with the rest of us you must give up your disgraceful life. The Mahar women of Kamathipura are a shame to the community. Unless you are prepared to change your ways, we shall have nothing to do with you, and we shall have no use for you.

There are only two ways open to you : either you remain where you are and continue to be despised and shunned, or you give up your disgraceful profession and come with us.

You will ask me how you are to make your living. I am not going to tell you that. There are hundreds of ways of doing it. But I insist that you must give up this degraded life. You must marry and settle down to normal domestic life as women of other classes do and not continue to live under conditions which inevitably drag you into prostitution." ¹



¹: The Times of India, dated 17th June 1936.

DO NOT BECOME A VICTIM TO ANY CONSPIRACY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar called a general meeting of 'Samta Sainik Dal' on Sunday Nov. 8, 1936 at 9 a.m., before leaving for Europe. This meeting was held at Damodhar Hall, Parel, Bombay and was chaired by Dr. Ambedkar.¹

While addressing the meeting Dr. Ambedkar said,

" I am leaving for Europe tomorrow in connection with some very important work of urgent nature. You will have to shoulder heavy responsibility in my absence. You must be knowing that according to the new Constitution fifteen seats have been reserved in the Legislative Assembly for the Depressed Classes. Election to the Legislative Assembly will be held in February next year. We have been allotted these fifteen seats in different districts of the Province. I have nominated candidates from the Independent Labour Party to contest elections against these seats. Why did my colleagues and I choose to form the Independent Labour Party to contest the coming elections? This is the question I am going to discuss in this meeting. With a well-organised and strong party like the Indian National Congress existing in India, what was the necessity of forming a new Party, is a legitimate question which many would like to ask. It has a very simple answer.

The main object of the Congress is to achieve independence. My colleagues and I also want to attain freedom but to achieve freedom is not so simple or easy task. Even the weapon of 'Satyagraha' evolved by Mr. Gandhi is not likely to be efficacious. Even with non co-operation and civil disobedience it is not possible to achieve independence. This certainly is beyond our capacity. Everybody seems to be thinking in this manner. If this is so difficult, what is the use of having dreams of such meaningless independence. So long as we do not have the strength and capacity to win true freedom, it is wise and profitable to follow the well-tried methods to achieve our object. I believe this is the correct view.

India has not yet become a nation. This country is divided into as many as 4000 castes. Besides this, there are the evils like

¹: Janata, dated 5th December 1936.

casteism, provincialism, religious differences and numerous other conflicts and quarrels which divide the country. With these divisive forces it is difficult to perceive that India will ever be united. Hindus, Muslims and Christians do not have a common goal. Granted, that the British Raj comes to an end in the present situation, will not those who do not believe in one nation and are religious fanatics and caste-conscious people fight against each other to capture political power?

In the absence of real strength to capture real and true freedom, it would be harmful to entertain dreams of freedom.

On the other hand there is a distinct difference between our stand and that of the Congress. Congress does not like the constitutional reforms. It is opposed to the reforms. They may put an end to the reforms after entering the Legislative Assembly. But, notwithstanding the fact that these reforms do not conform with our aspirations and demands, we prefer to work them and to use the opportunity to secure more rights in the legislative assemblies than those which have been given to us. This is not the time that the Legislative Assembly should be used as a playground for gimmicks and pranks.

Today Congress presents the picture of a motley crowd. Starting from the lowly porter, poor—labourer, peasants, petty trader, shopkeepers to landlords, usurers, merchants, middle class people, capitalists and exploiters are found in the Congress. In short people with all sort of conflicting interests are found in the Congress. This can those who thrive on the blood of the poor ever be the friend or the exploited? Congress is sitting in the lap of wealthy people. How can they help the poor peasants, farmers and workers?

Congress is not the party of the peasants and workers. Congress is the protector of the capitalists. It is difficult for the Congress to protect and safeguard the interests of working classes and common people.

As opposed to this our organisation - Independent Labour Party stands for the protection of the weaker section of the society.

It would be easy for our party to safeguard the interest of peasants and working classes than it would be for the Congress.

The main purpose of our Party is to fight for the interest of the Untouchables, the working classes, the poor and the deprived people. Without compromising our declared principles and policies we shall form alliances with other parties to win elections.

Many a time a question is asked as to why, leaving aside the cause of the Untouchables, I have chosen to work along with other people. In this connection I would like to say that in the proposed Legislative Assembly, according to the new Constitution, there will be 175 members who will be elected. Out of these 175 representatives there will be fifteen from the Untouchables. It is not possible for these fifteen members to work in an effective manner. It is, therefore, very essential to have a larger number of people to help us. They must be friends having similar ideas and principles. Those among the Non-Untouchables who have sincerely helped us, sacrificing their own interests and fought side by side with us for our cause must be adopted by us to contest election as our party (ILP) candidates. And, therefore, we must not waste our time in polemics at this stage. In order to achieve the object of our party, we must leave aside the bickerings, petty quarrels, wasteful activities and discussions. If you follow the spirit and the principles of the party in right earnest and work sincerely to make it a success then whatever I have been able to achieve for our people will be further strengthened.

If I am not successful in election to Legislative Assembly it would not matter very much. But no matter what happens you have to return Mr. Kalokhe as our candidate from the 'G' Ward. It is the matter of prestige for us.

Do not make a distinction at this stage between the Mang and the Mahar. Do not give any importance to narrow caste loyalties. We are all one people and this true feeling of unity we must keep in mind always and earnestly.

Now I proceed to deal with another important matter. I have selected most of the candidates from among the Mahar community

and have not taken many from other castes. Frankly speaking it would not be wise at this stage to go into the reasons for doing so. But those who have founded a so called Nationalist Harijan Party have levelled this charge against me and opened this issue. This allegation has to be refuted and an appropriate reply has to be given to them. I have chosen a name for this organisation of so called nationalist 'Harijans'. I call them 'lay bhagoo' lifters or pick run thieves.

I have not expelled or excluded anybody from the party mainly owing to his being a member of the Chambhar caste. They are free to think whatever they like. This does not bother me very much. In not selecting these 'Harijans' as candidates for the ensuing election to the Legislative Assembly it was mainly this 'pick and run' habit of these people which was responsible for their exclusion. They would go anywhere like beggars after alms. They have no respect for principles, party discipline and ideologies. 'Grab', 'pocket' and 'make off' with whatever they can lay their hands on has been their only principle.

We launched Mahad *Satyagraha*. We started the movement for self-respect and self-reliance. We also launched another struggle at Nashik. Not in the distant past, before the Poona Pact was signed, putting our lives in jeopardy we fought against Gandhi for our rights and political safeguards. These so called 'Nationalist Harijans' were comfortably perched in the camp of our enemies. If these scroungers now want a share in our success for which they have neither struggled nor co-operated with us, why should we show any generosity towards such people now? I do not care for the criticism of the people who choose to survive like bats. Not only this, even before the Poona Pact when Gandhiji staked his life, these very people rose in support of his stand and declared that they did not want any reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes to save Gandhi's life. Then, what right these people have to ask for a share now in the seats which had been won through our struggle. The chief leader of the so called Nationalist Harijans Shri Narayan Kajrolkar will one day be found sitting in the ranks of Dr. Savarkar. Shri P. Baloo will be found clinging for a seat in the camp of 'patriots' like Shri Vallabh Bhai Patel.

In such a situation what will be the position of this 'Harijan' organisation. I do not think it is necessary or proper for me to tell you today. Has anybody tried to throw any light on this kind of situation arising in future? The only person who has uptill now co-operated with and helped us in our struggle is Mr. Shivatarkar Master. He is a prominent leader born among the Chamar caste. Unfortunately he has not been granted permission by the Municipal Committee so far to contest election. It is, therefore, not possible to nominate him as a candidate of our party.

Well ! Sincerely speaking I consider that instead of entering the Legislative Assembly it is much better to work outside. The question of religious conversion is also hanging fire.

Inspite of this, respecting the wishes of our people, I have decided to enter the Legislative Assembly as a candidate of Independent Labour party. I fully believe that because of this decision on our part, Congress will try to put all sorts of obstacles in our way. In fact they have already started their efforts from today with the purpose of keeping me out of the Assembly. Therefore, all of us have to remain vigilant, united and continue to work in a disciplined manner. I must get all of your votes this time. Do not think that I am going to forsake my principles for the sake of election to Assembly.

You must clearly understand and keep in mind that there is nobody to help you. I would like to advise you not to become a victim to any conspiracy. At such time you will have to give up selfishness, greed and narrow-mindedness. Some persons, whose inclusion in the list of party candidates has not been found possible, easily take to the path of disintegration and disruption of the party out of resentment and frustration. You must bear in mind that the tree, which gives us shelter, cool and refreshing shade, comfort and protection, has to be nurtured and protected. I trust that you will never try to destroy its branches in any manner.

I have doubt what all such persons who are mainly led by selfish motives and have chosen to do harm to our cause will gain. I think they will not gain any thing at all. They are like the man who strikes at his feet with his own axe.

Leaving aside all other activities for the time being I have chalked out this programme with the help and co-operation of our colleagues and I am placing it before you. I hope all of you, members of the Samta Sainik Dal will endeavour to work for its success in a disciplined and earnest manner.

We have to face very strong and powerful enemies. Therefore, there should be a force of at least two thousand Samta Sainiks in the city of Bombay. Having sufficient man-power with devotion, dedication and unity, it has never been a difficult task for me to find a way out of any situation, no matter how grave it be. Congress and other organisations hostile to our cause are trying to put many obstructions in my election. I fully trust that all members of our community will cast their valuable votes in my favour and that no member residing in my ward will remain without casting his vote. This can be accomplished only if Samta Sainik Dal takes this task in its hands.

I am sure that in my absence each member of the Samta Sainik Dal will earnestly perform this important duty zealously and devotedly. I have appointed a committee for this purpose. I am certain, with the help of this committee, you will be able to successfully accomplish this task."



WE CANNOT ALLOW OUR GRIEVANCES TO CONTINUE

A big meeting was held on 30th May 1937 under the auspices of the Independent Labour Party at the Kamgar Maidan Parel, in Bombay. This meeting was specially arranged to congratulate the representatives who were elected in the election of Executive Council. Dr. P. J. Solanki had presided over the meeting. There were about 15 thousand people assembled for this meeting out of which there were about 1200 women. Various units of Samta Sainik Dal were specially summoned for the arrangement of this meeting.¹

"In this meeting Dr. B. R. Ambedkar reiterated his views and expressed his firm determination to work the new constitution for what it was worth in the best interests of the Depressed Classes. Appealing to the Congress Party to play the game and end the deadlock, he sounded a note of warning to the Congress Party and said: "We cannot allow our grievances to continue till the so-called Congress fight against imperialism is over." In the course of his speech he condemned the attitude taken by Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, who put up menials as candidates to contest the seats with chosen men from the Depressed Classes. He referred to Nehru's servant by name Hari as a case in point. Answering the question why he did not join the interim Ministry, he said that it was no use accepting office in a Ministry which commanded no majority in the Assembly and which was not likely to last long."²

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¹: Janata, dated 12th June 1937.

²: Keer, P 293.

THERE ARE NO DEPRESSED CLASS MINISTERS

"On July 31, 1937, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was on his way to Dhulia on a professional visit. He was accorded a great ovation at dawn by the Depressed Classes at Chalisgaon station. In the morning he reached Dhulia at eight o'clock and was greeted with thunderous applause and amidst shouts of a new slogan—"Who is Ambedkar?" "Ambedkar is our King !" Dr. Ambedkar then was taken out in procession to the travellers bungalow. After the business in the court was over in the afternoon he was entertained at a tea-party by Barve of Harijan Sevak Sangh.

In the evening Dr. Ambedkar addressed a meeting at the Vijayanand Theatre.

In the course of his speech he said that the main thing to be borne in mind was that the British rulers, who were indifferent to Untouchables, were now replaced by a set of leaders who belonged to the party of the social oppressors of the Depressed Classes. Those were the days, he continued, of union organization and precaution from the point of view of the Untouchables. He then pointed out how Brahminism was asserting itself in India through Ministries installed by the Congress. All the Congress Ministries were, he remarked, led by Brahmins while there were no Depressed Class Ministers."¹

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¹: Keer, P. 294.

DO NOT WORSHIP GODS IN HINDU RELIGION

" No. 11 of 1938.

Oriental Translator's Office
Secretariat,

Bombay, 5th January 1938.

Memorandum

The undersigned presents compliments to the Secretary to Government, Home Department (Political), and has the honour to forward the accompanying Marathi book *Niropya*, Vol. XXII, No. 6 (November 1937) as it contains noteworthy matter in an editorial note, appearing on pages 135-138.

2. The *Niropya* is printed and published by the Archbishop-Bishop of Poona at the Examiner Printing Press, Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay. The declaration of the keeper or the Examiner Printing Press stands in the name of J. M. Serres S. J. and is dated the 23rd January 1937. The date of issue of the book from the press is 1st November 1937.

3. Full translation of the editorial note appearing on pages 135 to 138 is sent herewith.

(Signed)

Oriental Translator to Government,
D. C. P.

(Signed)

Superintendent S. B. C. I. D.

Necessity of Conversion

Full translation of an editorial note headed "*Dr. Ambedkar Ani Dharmantarchi Avashyakata*" (i. e. Dr. Ambedkar and the necessity of conversion) appearing in the *Niropya*, Vol. XXII, No. 6 for the month of November 1937.

(Portions appearing in brackets throughout this translation do not appear in the original, except when otherwise indicated in the margin.)

It is learnt from the weekly newspaper *Janata* that a large public meeting of the Depressed Classes was held at the Municipal Hall, Bandra, on the 28th August 1937, under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and that the following resolution was passed thereat :--

"As resolved at the Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference our brothers and sisters should not observe the Hindu religious festivals, the religious rites of Hinduism such as vows, etc.; and religious practices such as fasts."

After several speeches had been made on this occasion Dr. Ambedkar rose to speak.

He said : "Our meeting is specially (convened) in order to remind (you) of the resolutions regarding conversion passed by the Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference. Therefore if any one has any questions (lit. doubts) to ask about conversion he should certainly ask them." As no one came forward to ask any question (lit. doubt) Dr. Ambedkar commenced his speech.

He said,

"Dear brothers and sisters,

I was not going to attend this meeting; but I learnt that there are some persons here who stick to old traditions and do not give full effect to the resolution regarding conversion passed by the 'Mahar Conference'. I have, therefore, come here to remove the doubts of such persons. I have several times expressed my views (on this subject) long ago. As a matter of fact you should not entertain any doubt about them in your minds. The Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference held in 1935 is fit to be written in letters of gold in the history of the Mahar community. The resolutions passed by such a Conference must, therefore, as a matter of fact, be obeyed by the Mahar community as a whole and a majority of the members of the Mahar community do act up to those resolutions.

Gods in Hindu religion should not be worshipped

Dr. Ambedkar further said, "We must give up (observing) all the religious festivals and days which we had been observing according to the Hindu religion. We must consider whether the rites performed according to the Hindu religion are proper from the point of view of religion and morality. Some rites are full of extreme ribaldry. For example, several persons observe fast on

Monday in the name of (god) Shankara and worship the *Pindi* (the Phallus or linga) of Shankara in various ways. But has anyone considered as to what the *Pindi* of Shankara is? It is nothing else but a representation of the union of man and women. Should we sing the praises of an indecent representation of this sort? If man and woman indulge in indecent behaviour in the street like dogs, are we to worship them with flowers or with shoes? Should we then worship the representation of the same act of Parvati (and) Shankara, i.e., the indecency of god ?

Similar is the case with Ganapati also." Dr. Ambedkar continued : "The story of Ganapati is that once Parvati was taking her bath naked, Shankara had gone somewhere else at that time. Therefore in order that she may not disturbed by any one, Parvati scraped off the dirt of her body and formed out of it, Ganapati the protector. Then how is this odious deity born out of dirt to be considered as God? God must be spotless and holiness incarnate, but the Gods in Hindu religion are very queer as I told you now. It is, therefore, my honest belief that they should not be worshipped."

Thirdly, Dr. Ambedkar related the story of Dattatraya, "Narada went on telling the wives of the three Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha that Anusuya the wife of the sage Atri was a highly chaste wife. They could not bear to see that any woman should be (considered) more chaste than themselves. Therefore these three wives asked their respective husbands to violate the chastity of Anusuya and the three heroes also listened to their wives and became ready to do so. These three persons went to Anusuya's house, sent her husband elsewhere on some pretext and began to live in Anusuya's company. In this condition she gave birth to a son. And as there was a doubt as to the fatherhood of the child three heads were attached to it in order to throw equal responsibility on these three (gods), and the same is the incarnation of Dattatraya."

**The movement (in favour) of conversion is
not to be withdrawn**

At the end of his speech, Dr. Ambedkar said "It is the impression of several people that the wave of conversion has now subsided. But it is not so. Conversion is sure to take

place. Bear it well in mind that I have not abandoned this movement. Several Hindus say to me 'our eyes have been opened as a result of your agitation for (lit. Question of) conversion. As we have now been awakened we shall not now fail in our duty towards you; do therefore withdraw your movement of conversion.' But I do not intend to withdraw the movement of the very reasons which I have related till now. Consider (the matter) thoroughly, and the new (lit. other) religion to be adopted must be adopted only after a close searching examination (lit. after heating and testing as in the case of gold). I hope that hereafter all the members of the Mahar community will act just in the manner decided by the Mahar Conference."*¹

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¹ : *Extract from Station Diary of Bhoiwada Police Station, dated Thursday, the 27th May 1937, 12-10 a. m..

This speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the resolutions were published in Janata, dated 4th September 1937.--Editors.

COMMUNISTS EXPLOITED THE LABOURERS

" Early in September 1937, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presided over a District Conference of the Depressed Classes at Masur.

In the course of his address he told his audience that it was his confirmed opinion that Gandhi was not man to look to the interests of the working classes and the poor. Had the Congress been a revolutionary body, he would have joined it. But he was convinced that it was not a revolutionary body. Congress was not courageous enough to proclaim the ideal of social and economic equality, enabling the common man to get leisure and liberty to develop himself according to his liking. That was not possible, he observed, as long as the means of production were controlled by a few individuals in their own interests. According to Gandhism, he said, the farmer would be the third bullock to be harnessed to the plough along with the two natural ones.

As regards the labour movement carried on by the Communists, he added that there was no possibility of his joining them. He declared that he was a confirmed enemy of the Communists, who exploited the labourers for their political ends. "¹

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¹ : Keer, Pp. 295-296.

BE ON THE GUARD AGAINST EXPLOITERS

" On December 30, 1937, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presided at the Sholapur District Conference of the Depressed Classes. He was enthusiastically received at dawn at Kurduwadi station. On his way Dr. Ambedkar made a brief halt and made a short speech before Matang Samaj at Karkam village.

He advised them to be on their guard against the Congress which, he said, comprised their exploiters, oppressors and bloodsuckers, who professed welfare of the poor under the garb of white dress and cap "1.

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SELF-RESPECT AND SELF-HELP MOVEMENT HAS NOTHING TO LOSE BUT EVERY THING TO GAIN

While on tour to Sholapur District Dr. B. R. Ambedkar reached Pandharpur on 31st December 1937 at noon. Then he was taken out in procession to the Travellers Bungalow. The President of the Pandharpur Municipality met him at the Bungalow, and then they both left for the conference which was held at the Municipal *Dharmashala*. People from far and near gathered to hear their great leader. More than one thousand women were present.

“ Dr. Ambedkar told the Conference that there were then three problems before them. The first was whether they would be ever given an equal status in Hindu society ; the second was whether they would get the proper share of national wealth ; and the third was what would be the fate of the self-respect, self-help movement. With regard to the first, he said that it was not possible as long as the caste system existed. As to the second, he expressed strong resentment at the treatment they got from the Congress which was ruled by the capitalists. He observed that as long as the Congress was in the hands of the capitalists, they could not rely on the present Government to do anything for the betterment of their economic condition. It was, therefore, he proceeded, necessary to form a united front against the capitalists, who were out to exploit them. He told them that the time had come for them to win their economic independence. Respecting the third, he said that they should remember one thing that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain by the step. They had only to shed the fear of death. ”

The Conference supported whole-heartedly the Mahar Vatan Bill introduced in the Assembly by their leader.

Dr. Ambedkar was then taken to the Municipal Hall. The members received him cheerfully. The President made a feeling speech on the occasion and garlanded the guest. Dr. Ambedkar reciprocated their feelings and thanked them all. ”¹



¹ : Keer, Pp. 297-298.

CHRISTIANS LAGGED BEHIND POLITICALLY

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar made important speech on 1st January 1938 in Sholapur. The local Christians were eager to hear his views on religion. So he addressed a meeting of the Christians under the Presidentship of the Rev. Gangadhar Jadhav.”

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that since the day he declared his intention to abjure Hindu religion, he had become a commodity for bargain or a source of comedy. He referred to the comedy, *Vande Bharatam*, written by Acharya P. K. Atre, a well-known playwright in Maharashtra, who had ridiculed the idea of conversion in his play. Yet he stated that he was firm in his resolve. From his study of comparative religion he could say that two personalities could captivate him. They were the Buddha and Christ.

He further said that he wanted a religion which instructed people how they should behave with one another and prescribed for man his duty to another and relation with God in the light of equality, fraternity and liberty.

He told the Christians that their co-religionists in Southern India observed caste system in churches. Besides they lagged behind politically. If the Mahar boys became Christians they lost their scholarships. Thus there was no economic gain in their being Christian. Moreover, the Indian Christians, he remarked, as a community never fought for the removal of social injustice.¹

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¹: Keer, Pp. 299-230.

WORK FOR UPLIFT OF UNTOUCHABLES

The fourth Session of the Mang Community Conference was held at Sholapur on 1st January 1938.

Addressing the meeting Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that his work for the uplift of Untouchables was not limited to Mahars but was for all Depressed Classes. He had opened hostels for them and had secured posts in Government Department for Mangs and Chamars. About 2,500 attended.¹

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¹ : Bombay Secret Abstract, dated the 8th January 1938.

DEMOCRACY MUST GIVE RESPECTFUL HEARING TO ALL WHO ARE WORTH LISTENING TO

From Pandharpur Dr. B. R. Ambedkar went to Sholapur to address the Matang Conference. On his arrival he was presented with a civic address of welcome by the Sholapur Municipality in the morning of January 4, 1938* at the Bhagwat Chitra Mandir. The address was read and presented by Rao Bahadur Dr. V. V. Muley, who had helped the cause of the Untouchables at Sholapur in the capacity of the President of the Municipality. In reply Dr. Ambedkar made a very important speech, expressing his views on the working of Parliamentary Democracy.

He said,

“ In the political situation that has grown up in this country, there has grown the habit among the people of paying homage to only one political party, the Congress. ”

“ I am no believer, ” continued he, “ in Democracy as an ideal to be pursued in all circumstances and in all claims ; and having regard to the present-day conditions in India, Democracy is a most unsuitable system of Government. At any rate, for some time India needs the strong hand of an enlightened autocrat. ”¹

“ In this country we have, ” observed he, “ Democracy, but it is a Democracy which has ceased to exercise its intelligence. It has bound itself hand and foot to one organization and only one. It is not prepared to sit in judgment over the doings or thinking of this organization. I consider it the greatest malaise, a disease and a sickness. It has affected all our people. They are intoxicated. ” “ Unfortunately, ” he added, “ the Indian people are by tradition men who have more faith and less wit. Anyone who does anything out of the ordinary, does something so eccentric as

* Keer and Bharill had taken extracts of the speech from the Times of India dated 4th January 1938. Keer mentioned the date of the function as 4th January 1938 where as Bharill as 1938. From the perusal of Janata dated 8th, 15th January and 5th February 1938 and also report of the Mang Community Conference, it is obvious that Dr. Ambedkar attended the above function on the 1st January 1938.---Editors.

¹: Keer, Pp. 298-299. Also referred the Times of India dated 4th January 1938.

to be called in other countries an insane person, acquires in this country the status of a Mahatma or Yogi. And people follow him as the sheep follow the shepherd.....”

I am sure that if this continues we could reap no benefit from the political advancement which this country has secured under the act. Dr. Ambedkar emphatically stated that, " democracy must learn that its safety lies in having more than one opinion regarding the solution of any particular problem, and in order that people may be ready to advice with their opinions, democracy must learn to give a respectful hearing to all who are worth listening." ¹

“ I am glad, ” he concluded, “ that the Sholapur Municipality has set an example in voting an address to me who do not belong to an organization which claims to be the only organization in the country and whic h all people are in a mood to uphold at present. ” ²

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¹: The Times of India dated 4th January 1938.

Reprinted Bharill, Pp 190-191.

²: Keer, P. 299.


PEASANTS AND WORKERS SHOULD THINK OVER THE CAUSES OF THEIR POVERTY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar lead a march of the peasants to the Council Hall in Bombay on 10th January 1938. Peasants from outlying Districts such as Thana, Kolaba, Ratnagiri, Satara and Nasik came to Bombay in trains and steamers. With torn clothes on, blankets and bundles on their shoulders, and stuffs in their hands, they came to Bombay to voice their grievances. Their sun-burnt faces shone with a certain enthusiasm. They marched on to the Council Hall from three directions in processions ; one from Parel, the other from the Alexandra Docks and the third from Chowpatty. Escorted by the police, they walked slowly along the prescribed routes. Police parties were posted at important junctions. The processionists carried posters bearing slogans such as "Down with the Khoti System", "Support Dr. Ambedkar's Bill". The processionists reached the Esplanade Maidan near the Victoria Terminus at half past one in the afternoon. There the police officers held up the processions and allowed twenty leaders to go to interview the Chief Minister who was then called the Premier. Parulekar, S. C. Joshi, D. W. Raut, Indulal Yagnik and A. V. Chitre headed by Dr. Ambedkar, saw the Premier.

The first demand presented by the deputationists was the enforcement of the minimum standard of wages for agricultural labourers. The second was that all the arrears of rent should be remitted since the revenue arrears had been also remitted. They urged that immediate legislation should be made to provide with or without compensation for the abolition of the Khoti System and the Inamdar System ; and landlordism, which was economically wasteful and sociality tyrannous, must go. The last demand was for reduction of fifty per cent of irrigation rates payable by small holders. The Premier told the deputationlists that every problem was being tackled by the Ministry in their own way.

The leaders returned to the Esplanade Maidan and addressed a mammoth meeting Dr. Ambedkar made a very powerful speech.

“ He said that the number of books he had read on Communism exceeded the number of books read by all Communist leaders put together.* But he was of the opinion that the Communists never looked to the practical side of the question. He observed that there were two classes in the world—the haves and the havenots, the rich and the poor, the exploiters and the exploited ; the third one, the middle-class, was very small. He, therefore, exhorted the peasants and workers to think over the causes of their poverty and told them that they lay in the richness of the exploiters. The way out for them was to organize a labour front without any regard to caste or creed, and to elect to the legislatures those who were their real representatives. If they did so, they would have shelter, clothing, and they who produced the food and wealth of the nation would not die from hunger. ”¹



* The Janata, dated 15th January 1938.

¹: Keer, Pp. 300-301.

GUARD THE INTERESTS OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

“ Under the auspices of the Ahmednagar District Depressed Class Sewa Sangh, a public meeting was held in the Kamgar Maidan on January 15th 1938, under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, to congratulate Mr. Prabhakar Janardan Roham, M.L.A., on his election to the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Mr. Roham was presented with an address and a purse of Rs. 201 at the said meeting. About 500 persons attended.

Dr. Ambedkar, Bhawoosaheb Gaikwad and Shinde Master addressed the gathering in Marathi.

They stated that Mr. Roham was successful in getting himself elected to the Assembly on the ticket of the Independent Labour Party, due to the solid support of the Depressed Classes of the Ahmednagar District and now expected him to guard the interests of the Depressed Classes. In conclusion, they thanked the audience for their attendance at the meeting.

The meeting commenced at about 10.30 p.m. and concluded peacefully at about 11.30 p.m. ”¹

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¹: Source material Vol. I, P. 163.

TRADE UNIONS MUST ENTER POLITICS TO PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS

A Conference of all the 'Untouchable' workers of the 'Great Indian Peninsula' (GIP) Railways was held at Manmad on 12th & 13th February 1938. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar consented to be the Chairperson for this Conference and accordingly an informative handbill was circulated among all the branches of GIP Railways.

This Conference was planned to discuss the problems faced by the 'Untouchable' workers in the Railways due to the practice of Untouchability. It was also planned to discuss the pitiable condition of these Untouchables and their families', in spite of the Railway being one of the richest and strongest organizations in India.

To make this Conference a success, the workers from Manmad, Bhusawal, Kalyan, Igatpuri, Nandgaon, Dound, Solapur, Thane and Mumbai had discussed this issue with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar previously. To this, there was positive response from Delhi, Allahabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jabalpur, Raipur etc.

An appeal was made to make this Conference a grand success. Shri R. R. Pawar, who was well known amongst the 'Untouchable' Railway workers, was the general secretary of this Conference.

It appears from the correspondence between Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Shri R.R. Pawar, General Secretary, 'Dalit Workers Conference', Manmad, that due to unavoidable circumstances Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was unable to attend the Conference on 29th & 30th January 1938 and instead, he himself suggested 12th & 13th February 1938 (Saturday and Sunday) for this Conference. This correspondence was included in the handbill of the Conference.

A huge pandal was erected for this Conference on the open land of Mr. Ibrahim Tajbhai Sheth, just near the Manmad Railway Station and was named as 'Dalit-Kamagar (workers) Nagar'.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made a halt at Manmad on both these days. During this period he visited Satana and Kazisangavi.

A "Youth Conference" was arranged on Saturday February 12th for which Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was Chairperson.* The future programmes of 'Independent Labour Party' and its vigorous implementation in all the areas were discussed in this Conference.

Similar to the Youth Conference, 'Untouchable Women's Conference' was planned on Sunday 13th February at 3 p.m. under the chairmanship of Mrs. Mainabai Shamrao Bhole, a worker from Pune. Mrs. Venubai Ravikant Jadhav was elected as Chairperson of the Reception Committee for this Conference. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar addressed those women about the movement and guided them.

Various entertainment programmes were held on both these days. A band from Chalisgaon was specially called for this Conference. Loudspeakers were arranged in the pandal. Mr. R.R. Pawar, Mr. Bankar, Mr. Ahire, Mr. Khare, Mr. Sansare, Mr. Patil, Mr. Sarode, Mr. More, Mr. Pagare, Mr. Telure etc. worked hard to make this Conference a grand success.

On this occasion, separate offices for 'Janta' weekly and 'Independent Labour Party' were established in the Conference premises to collect the annual membership for 'Janta' and membership fees of 'Independent Labour Party' along with information about these movements.

The Conference

The Conference was successfully held on 12th & 13th February 1938. 'Dalit Kamgar Nagar' was well decorated. Seating arrangement for about twenty thousand delegates was made. A separate dais was prepared for the President and other workers. The photographs of various workers along with a large portrait of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar decorated with flowers were

*The speech delivered in the Youth Conference is on page 193--Editors.

arranged. Special arrangements for women, members of Reception Committee and special invitees were made. On Saturday evening Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was welcomed in 'Dalit Kamgar Nagar' with the band and loud cheers of 'long live Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar', 'workers victory' etc. till he occupied the dais.

Initially few songs were sung by young boys and girls. Mr. Shankarrao Salve took lot of efforts for the success of this programme. Mr. P.N. Bankar read his welcome speech. Mr. Ramchandra Pawar welcomed the delegates and invitees. He read, on this occasion, the various messages, specially sent by Subhedar Vishram Gangaram Sawadkar and Bhai Anantrao Chitre from Mahad.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was elected as Chairperson for the Conference, on Saturday 12th February 1938. His election as a Chairperson was acclaimed by loud clapping by the audience. After occupying the chairperson's place and after getting garlanded, Dr. Ambedkar gave an introductory speech.

On the second day, Sunday, 13th February 1938, regular work of the Conference was resumed with some delay. In spite of the heat of the sun in the 'Dalit Kamgar Nagar', huge crowd had assembled to listen to the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He rose to speak in the midst of the overwhelming clappings of the people.....¹

In his speech Dr. Ambedkar said,

" Friends !

This is a Conference of the Depressed Classes who are working as Railwaymen on the G.I.P.* Railway. The Depressed Classes have heretofore met in many a conferences in this Province as well as in other Provinces of India and on many occasions. In a certain sense this is not the first Conference. But in another sense it is the first of its kind. The Depressed Classes have hitherto agitated principally for the removal of social grievances. They have not taken up the work of the removal of their economic grievances. This is the first time when they

¹ : Janta, dated 8 may; 25th December 1937 and 22nd January, 5th February 1938.

*Great Indian Peninsula Railway

are meeting to consider their economic grievances. Hitherto they were meeting as *Pariahs*. Now you are meeting as workers. I am not prepared to say that we have been wrong in concentrating our efforts in emphasizing social grievances. Whatever other people may say there are grievances under the load of which our very manhood is crushed out. Nor can it be said that our agitation has borne no fruit. It is true that we have not succeeded in the removal of Untouchability. It is true that we have not succeeded in securing some of the most elementary rights to which all human beings are entitled. But it is also true that our agitation has succeeded in so far as we have obtained possession of political power. Who has power has liberty is an observation which no one can gainsay. Power is the only means whereby one can secure liberty and free himself from all obstacles and political power has a potency which if it is not as great as religious or economic power is quite real and effective as far as it goes. I am sorry that the political power which the Depressed Classes have got under the new constitution has been frittered away by the machinations of our enemies and by the selfishness of needy and profligate adventurers from among ourselves. Power behind which there is no organization, power behind which there is no consciousness is no power. I hope one day, not before very long the Depressed Classes will become organized, will become conscious of the power they have got and will begin to put it to wise and effective use in order to secure their social emancipation.

Although I am not prepared to say that our efforts have been misdirected I confess that we have too long neglected to lay the same emphasis on the economic problems with which we are faced as we do on social problems and I am therefore glad that we have met today more as workers than as Untouchables. It is a new departure and I congratulate those who have given us this opportunity of discussing them.

There are however some people who have read into this move a sinister motive and have criticised me for being a party to this Conference. I would not have cared for this criticism had it not been that this criticism comes from labour leaders. The gravamen of their charge seems to be that by holding this Conference of the Depressed Class Workers we are dividing the ranks of labour.

There are in my view two enemies which the workers of this country have to deal with. The two enemies are *Bramhanism* and *Capitalism*. The accusation by our critics arises partly because the critics fail to reckon Brahmanism as an enemy which the workers have to deal with. I do not want to be misunderstood when I say that Brahmanism is an enemy which must be dealt with. By Bramhanism I do not mean the power, privileges and interests of the Bramhins as a community. That is not the sense in which I am using the word. By Bramhanism I mean the negation of the spirit of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In that sense it is rampant in all classes and is not confined to the Bramhins alone though they have been the originations of it. This Bramhanism which pervades everywhere and which regulates the thoughts and deeds of all classes is an incontrovertible fact. It is also an incontrovertible fact that this Bramhanism gives certain classes a privileged position. It denies certain other classes even equality of opportunity. The effects of Bramhanism are not confined to what are *social rights* such as inter-dining or inter-marriage. If that was so, one would not mind it. But it is not so. It extends to *civic rights* as distinguished from *social rights*. Use of public schools, of public wells, of public conveyances, of public restaurants are matters of civic rights. Everything which is intended for the public or maintained out of public fund must be open to every citizen. But there are millions to whom these civic rights are denied. Can anybody doubt that this is the result of Brahmanism which has been let loose in this country for thousands of years and which is functioning even now as a live wire ? So omnipresent is Bramhanism that it even affects the field of economic opportunities. Take the Depressed Class worker and compare his opportunities with a worker who does not belong to the Depressed Classes. What opportunities of obtaining work has he ? What are the prospects he has in the matter of security of service or advancement therein ? It is notorious that there are many avocations from which a Depressed Class worker is shut out by reason of the fact that he is an Untouchable. A notorious case in point is that of the Cotton Industry. I do not know of what happens in other parts of India. But I know that in the Bombay Presidency the Depressed Classes are shut out from

the weaving department in the Cotton Mills both in Bombay and in Ahmedabad. They can only work in the spinning department. The spinning department is the lowest paid department. The reason why they are excluded from the weaving department is because they are Untouchables and because on that account the caste Hindu worker objects to work with them although he does not mind working with the Musalmans.

Take the Railways. What is the position of the Depressed Class worker on the Railways. No one can deny that his destiny is to work as a gangman. Day in and day out, all his life he works as a gangman with no prospects of a rise. There is no higher grade post that is open to him. Very rarely he is employed even as a Porter. That is because as a porter he must also work as a domestic servant as a part of his customary duties in the household of the Station Master. A Depressed Class worker becomes quite useless to the station master who is generally a high caste Hindu because he cannot avail himself of the services of the porter for his household purposes if the porter is an Untouchable. He therefore generally avoids appointing a Depressed Class man as a porter. In the Railway there is no qualifying examination for the appointment of clerks and Non-Matrices are usually employed for these posts. Hundreds of non-matrices from Indian Christians, from Anglo-Indians, and Caste Hindus are employed as clerks in the Railways. But the Depressed Class boys who are non-matrices and there are hundreds of them are systematically rejected and hardly one ever gets a chance. The same is the case in Railway Workshops. Very seldom is a Depressed Class man employed as a mechanic. Hardly ever is a Depressed man seen to occupy the position of a Mistry. He is never made a foreman, or even a chargeman in the Workshop. He is just a cooly and remains a cooly. Such is the condition of the Depressed class workers in the Railways.

In those avocations where he has a chance to obtain work he is employed in the lowest grade. He is excluded from any place of power or authority. He is not only employed in the lowest grade but he is confined to that grade until he retires. There is no rise for him. There is no career for him and often

there is no promotion for him. This is what happens to him when there is no slump. In days of slump he is the first to be fired as in the boom he is the last to be employed.

To the critics who have accused me and you of sinister motive I wish to ask two questions--and they are plain questions-- are these or are these not real grievances? Secondly, if they are real grievances must not those who are suffering from them organize in order to see that they are removed? If the answer to these two questions is in the affirmative--I do not see how any honest man can give any other answer-- then our attempt is amply justified. Labour leaders who are accusing us are undoubtedly suffering from certain delusion. They have read in Karl Marx that there *can* be only two classes--owners and workers and, on reading Marx they straight way assume that in India there are only owners and workers and proceed on their mission of demolishing capitalism. There are obviously two errors in this. The first error consists in thinking as real what is only possible or ideal. Marx never said as dogma that there are only two clear-cut classes in a society namely the owners and workers. Such a statement is untrue in fact and therefore it is dangerous as a foundation to build upon it any active propaganda with any chance of success. It would be as false as to hold that an economic man or a rational man or a reasonable man is a fact which exists in all classes. The economist has always uttered a wise caution whenever he puts forth the economic man as a basic fact for drawing his conclusion -- that the economic man exists only if other things are equal. The labour leaders have forgotten this *ceteris paribus*. It would be incorrect to suppose that even in Europe, what Marx said was true. "Is there a poor and oppressed man in Germany? Is there a robbed and ruined artisan of France? Well, there they appertain to one race, one county, one creed, one past, one present, and one future. Let them unite." This is an exhortation which has been addressed ever since the days of Marx. Has the poor and oppressed man in Germany united with the robbed and ruined artisan of France? Even after 100 years they did not learn to unite and in the last war they fought as open, avowed and ruthless enemies. It would be positively erroneous with regard to India. A clear cut division

does not exist in India. That all labourers are one, form one class is an ideal to be achieved and it is the greatest error to assume it as a fact. How are we to consolidate the ranks of labour ? How are we to bring about unity among labour ? Not by allowing one section of the workers to suppress other section of the workers. Not by preventing the oppressed section from organizing. Not by preventing the aggrieved section from agitating against the injustice that is being done to them. The real way to bring about unity is to remove the causes which make one worker the antagonist of another worker on the ground of race and religion. The real way to bring about unity is to tell the worker that he is wrong in claiming rights which he is not prepared to give to other workers. The real way to bring about unity is to tell the worker who makes these social distinctions which result in unfair discrimination are wrong in principle and injurious to the solidarity of workers. In other words we must uproot Bramhanism - this spirit of inequality - from among the workers if the ranks of labour are to be united. But where is the labour leader who has done this among workers? I have heard labour leaders speaking vociferously against Capitalism. But I have never heard any labour leader speaking against Bramhanism amongst workers. On the other hand their silence on this point is quite conspicuous. Whether their silence is due to their belief that Bramhanism has nothing to do with the organisation and unity of workers, whether it is due to their non-appreciation of the fact that Bramhanism has great deal to do with the disorganisation of labour or whether it is due to sheer opportunism which believes in acquiring leadership of labour and not saying anything which would hurt the feelings of the workers I do not stop to inquire. But I must say that if Bramhanism is admitted to be the root cause of the disorganisation of labour then a serious effort must be made to remove it from the workers. This infection will not go away merely by ignoring it or by remaining silent about it. It must be pursued, dug out and knotted. Then and then only will the way for the unity of workers be made safe.

So long as Bramhanism remains a living force and so long as people continue to stick to it because it confers privileges upon one class and puts handicaps on others, I am afraid, that

till then there will be the necessity for those who suffer from these handicaps to organize themselves. And what harm is there if they do organize themselves. I could understand the force of the complaint if this organization was engineered by the employers. If it could be proved that we are the tools of the employers, that we are playing into their hands, that we are organizing separately with the deliberate purpose of dividing the ranks of labour, then there would be sufficient justification for condemning this conference. Indeed such a conduct could be denounced as treachery. But can any one say that this move of ours is engineered by the employers and that we are out to help the employers and ruin the cause of labour ? I challenge any of our critics to do so.

There is therefore no necessity to be ashamed of or to offer any apology for holding this Conference. The reasons and motives amply justify it. There are one or two men from the Depressed Classes who have disapproved of this Conference. There is nothing strange in this. Some of them are the tools and hirelings of others. Some are misguided. The Depressed Classes are so weak in themselves and the word union has such a charm in it, especially when it falls from the lips of influential propagandist that it is no wonder they are deluded; but such people forget that there can be no real union between parties whose feelings and attitudes are in every respect opposed to each other and where one of whom claims rights and interests which are adverse to the interests of the others. Union among such people would be nothing but fraud upon the weak and suffering party. Every sincere man who repudiates the fraud is maligned by these imposters, as one who would sow division. Division, indeed! Yes, a division it may be, but it is a division, where a real difference and a real antagonism exists. This antagonism arises chiefly because one section of Labour claims vested rights against another section of Labour namely the Depressed Classes. Nobody wants to create a difference. What we are doing is to recognize the difference and to prevent the difference from working an injustice to us.

There is no question that you must organize if you want to remove your grievances. The next question is what purpose is your organization to serve. That you must organize for trade purposes goes without saying. The question is should you form a separate union of your own or should you join any of the existing unions. This is a question which you must seriously consider before you decide upon your line of action.

Trade unionism in India is in a sorry state. The chief aim of trade unions is completely lost sight of. The chief aim of trade unionism is to protect the standard of living of the working class from being reduced. In Europe there is a noticeable tendency on the part of a normal man to cling to his established standard of comfort to the mode of life to which by birth and training he is accustomed. He will resist with firm determination any attempt to reduce it. It is notorious that this determination is not to be found in the Indian worker. He is anxious only to exist. He has no desire to live. And as Mill pointed out "where there is not in the people a resolute resistance to this deterioration - a determination to preserve an established standard of comfort - the condition of the poorest class sinks, even in a progressive state, to the lowest point which they will consent to endure." If there is any country where trade unionism was an absolute necessity in my opinion it was India. But as I said today trade unionism in India is a stagnant and stinking pool. It is entirely due to the fact that the leadership of trade unionism is either timid, selfish or misguided. There are some labour leaders who are only arm-chair philosophers or politicians who have limited their task to issuing statements in the papers. Organizing the workers, educating the workers and helping them to agitate does not form part of their duty. They are only anxious to represent the workers and speak on their behalf but avoid having any contact with them. A second category of labour leaders is of those who are engaged in forming unions for the sole purpose of finding a place for themselves as Secretaries, Presidents or Chairmen. To maintain themselves in their places they try to keep their unions as separate and rival entities. One notices the astounding and shameful phenomenon that the warfare between different unions is far more deadly than what exists - if any at all - between workers and owners - and all this for what - for no other purpose than that of securing

mastery over unions for certain individuals whose ambition is to find a leader's place for themselves. The third class of labour leaders is composed principally of the communists. They may be well meaning but I have no hesitation in saying that they are a misguided body of men and I go further and say that nobody has brought a greater ruination on the workers than these men. If to-day the back of workers is completely broken, if to-day the masters have the upper hand, if to-day unionism is an anathema it is entirely due to the misuse of the powers which the communists had at one time secured over the trade unions. Their aim seems to bring about discontent among the workers as though there was any absence of it, because they believe that with a discontented body of workers they will bring about a revolution and establish the rule of the proletariat. Therefore to bring about discontent they launched upon a systematic campaign of organizing disorganization. The series of strikes on which they drove the men can have no other meaning and no other consequence except that it was a deliberate attempt to organize disorganization. For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent: what is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social right. Not even a revolutionary Marxist would make a fetish of strikes, as was done in the good old days by the Revolutionary Syndicalists. The strike was never considered by revolutionary Marxists as a "revolutionary exercise" but was regarded as a very serious measure to be resorted to as a last extremity after all efforts have proved unavailing. But the Communists have thrown all this to the winds and have looked upon strikes as a divine means of creating discontent among the workers. Whether they have created greater discontent or not they have most certainly destroyed the very trade union organizations which were the source of their strength and their power and now they are practically on the streets seeking to take shelter under all sorts of capitalist organizations. What else can be expected from such a senseless activity. The Communist is like an incendiary who in his desire to set up a general conflagration has not taken care to save his own house.

As a result there are no unions in existence to which workers can resort to. I am not going to speak about the *malaise* that prevails among the textile workers in Bombay. The less is said about it the better. But take the state of affairs existing in the G. I. P. Railway workers. In 1920 the G. I. P. Railway Staff Union was organized. It was defunct between the years 1922-24. It was revived in 1925. In 1927 another rival union by name the G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union was organized. In 1931 the two unions were amalgamated under the name of Railway Worker's Union. In 1932 there was a split in this union and a new union called the Railway Labour Union was started. In 1935 the old G. I. P. Staff Union was revived and started as a new body. It is now the recognized union and there is a sharp conflict and rivalry between these unions which all are out to serve the interests of the Railway workers. All this conflict is due to competition for leadership between the communist and non-communist groups among the labour leaders. The same rivalry has caused a split in the central organization. The All India Trade Union Congress was started in 1919 as the central organization of labour. All unions were affiliated to this Congress till 1929. In 1929 a split occurred at Nagpur and those unions which did not accept the leadership of the Communist section seceded and formed a separate body called the National Trade Union Federation. A sharp antagonism prevails between these two bodies. In 1931 and 1932 efforts were made to bring about unity between these two rival bodies. But they have failed. Something to that effect is now on the anvil. What good will come out of it is more than I can say. Under these circumstances it is difficult for me to give you any advice. There would be nothing wrong if you started a separate union of your own provided you have got the men to run the union. This is a very big proviso. A union if it is to flourish must function and a union cannot function if it cannot secure the services of efficient functionaries. Can you get men to run your union ? If you can, form your own Union. In fact it would be better if you did. There is nothing wrong in a separate union. Because separate unions need not result in separatism or weakness. Your separate union can always be affiliated to some central organization of labour which can give

unity of purpose and unity of action. If you cannot organize a separate union of your own you may join any one of the existing unions. But you must take care that the union does not use you for its purposes. There is great danger of such a thing happening. It has happened in Bombay where invariably strikes have been called in the interests of the weavers and the spinners have been used to support the cause of the weavers. To avoid this you must insist upon two conditions. Firstly you must insist upon a special representation in the executive of the union so that your special problems will receive the attention and support of the union. Secondly you must insist upon some part of your contribution to the union to be ear-marked for being used if necessary for fighting out your grievances. These must be two essential conditions on which you should join a general union of all workers if you do not decide to have a separate of your own.

There is no question that you must organize a union for trade purposes. But that is not enough. You must also organize for political purposes. Experience has shown that trade unionism by itself cannot help the labourers to win in their struggle against the masters. The question whether trade unions should enter politics is a question on which there can now be no two opinions.

Trade unions must enter politics because without political power they cannot protect purely trade union interests. Even for the purpose of securing such reforms as standard rate, normal day, common rule, minimum living wage, collective bargaining are aims which cannot be secured merely by organizing unions. The power of unions must be strengthened by the force of law. This cannot happen until in addition to organizing yourselves into unions you also begin to play your part in the politics of the country.

The protection of purely trade union interests cannot be the only reason why trade union must enter politics. To confine your attention to trade unionism is to mistake the immediate task for the ultimate goal; it is to assume that slaving for others is a destiny which the labouring classes cannot escape. On the contrary your aim should be to replace this system of wage-slavery by a system which will recognize the principles of liberty,

equality, and fraternity. This means re-building of society and, I say that it is the primary concern of the labouring class to bring about such a reconstruction of society. But how can the labouring class realize this ideal ? Effective use of political power is certainly a powerful means to this end. Why should they not seize such political power as they have got ? Repudiation of politics by trade unions does not mean that workers, as individuals will not interest themselves in politics. On the contrary, many of them will attend political meetings, vote at elections for one candidate or another and frequently join one or other of the political parties. "No politics" for trade unions does not mean no politics for workers who are members of the union. The watch word of 'No Politics' will apply only to the organized forms of politics. Under such circumstances every individual worker could privately engage in politics as much as he desired, and of any shade he liked, but when organized with his fellow workers he was to quit politics the moment he entered his organization. Naturally, by thus atomising himself politically, by refusing to use in the interests of his class, that which constitutes this main strength i. e. organization the worker is sure to be a prey to the organized force of the capitalist party. As you probably know that the two rival bodies which claim the right to speak in the name of labour, the Trade Union Congress and the Trade Union Federation have decided to merge themselves into one body. Each has gone by half to bring about this unity. The Trade Union Congress has adopted the constitution of the Trade Union Federation and the Trade Union Federation has agreed to drop its name. I understand that one of the conditions of this unity is that this organization is to be a purely Trade Union organization. It is to have no politics. When I heard this I wondered if these gentlemen really understood what they said. It is a matter of great sorrow that the workers have been suffering the gross injustice to which they have been subjected chiefly by neglecting to use the means at their command towards removing the cause of it, I mean the use of political power. I fail to understand what this trade union unity is if it is not for a united political action. There is some meaning in the phrase agreeing to differ if the point on which there is difference is so small or immaterial that it does not disturb the agreement

on other important and material points. But there is no meaning in a unity where the point on which people agree to differ is so big that the agreement on small and minor points is of no consequence whatsoever. Whatever may be the view of other people I must say that if organized labour avows to eschew politics their labour is doomed. We at any rate must realize that hitherto our efforts have been directed in one channel of social reform and that we had forgotten or partially remembered that there was the necessity of directing our efforts in the channel of economic reform. We must realize that all the evils under which we suffer have a common origin- namely that those who exercise social and economic dominance over us have taken over in their hands political power which rightly belongs to the labouring classes.

To enter politics means the formation of a party. Politics without a party behind it is a futility. There are many politicians who prefer to be independent, to plough their lonely furrow. I am always suspicious of a politician who wants to be independent. If a politician is so independent that he cannot join with anybody then he is useless for any practical purposes. He can achieve nothing. His lonely furrow cannot make even a blade of grass grow. But many a politician who want to be independent desire independence not because their intellectual honesty demands it. They want independence because they want to be free to sell themselves to the highest bidder. It is because of this that they want to be free from the trammels of party discipline. At any rate such has been my experience of many of the politicians who are pursuing the line of independence in politics. Without a party there can be no real effective politics.

Question is what party you should join. There are various alternatives. There is the Congress. Should you join the Congress? Will it help the cause of labour ? I have no hesitation in saying that labour should have a separate organization in politics independent of the Congress. I know that this view is opposed by a section of the labour leaders. There is a section represented by the Congress Socialists who would like to have labour organizing itself for the achievement of Socialism but

the organization must be within the Congress. There is another section- calling itself communist- represented by Mr. Roy which is vehemently opposed to any separate organization by labour or by any class in India either inside or outside the Congress. I am entirely in disagreement with either group. Mr. Roy must be a puzzle to many as he is to me. A communist ! And opposed to separate political organization of labour !! A terrible contradiction in terms !! A point of view which must make Lenin turn in his grave. The only rational justification that one can give for so queer a view is that Mr. Roy looks upon the destruction of Imperialism as the first and foremost aim of Indian politics. In no other way can one read any sense in the view which is being propagated by Mr. Roy. This view would be correct if it could be proved that with the disappearance of Imperialism all vestige of Capitalism will also disappear from India. But it does not require much intelligence to realise that even if the British depart from India, the landlords, the mill-owners, the money-lenders will remain in India and continue to bleed the people and that even after Imperialism has gone, labour will have to fight these interests just as much. If this is so why should not labour organize from now ! Why should it wait for developing its organization ? I don't find any answer. The Congress Socialists evidently realize that labour has to fight capitalism as much as Imperialism and therefore agree that labour must organize. But they have put a proviso that any labour organization must be within the Congress. I am not able to understand the virtue or necessity of this compulsory coalition between the Congress and labour. The aim of the Congress Socialist is to bring about Socialism, so they say. How they hope to bring it about, by converting the right wing of the Congress. That is the explanation they give for not going out of the Congress. A more pathetic case involving utter ignorance of human nature cannot be imagined. If socialism is to be the aim then the way to bring it about is to preach it to the masses and organize them for that purpose. Socialism will not come by wooing the classes. That the right wing of the Congress will not tolerate more than a slight dose of socialism is a fact which is becoming clear day by day. Pandit Nehru last year opened a whirl-wind campaign in favour of socialism. The poor

man was soon called to order and like a naughty boy was sent to his room, made to live on bread and water and was brought downstairs only on his agreeing to behave well. The Pandit has now completely recanted and has become so much domesticated that he now objects to the red flag which he once waived but which to the right wing in the Congress is an anathema. The right wing of the Congress in Bihar has shown its teeth. Swami Sahajanand, the leader of the Kisan has left the Congress and his colleague Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan is about to leave. I am told that at the last meeting of the A. I. C. C. held in Bombay the Congress Socialists were charged by the Right wing for indiscipline for preaching socialism from Congress platform and let off a simple admonition as is done with first offenders under the Criminal Procedure Code. Such is the futility of the politics of the Congress Socialists.

Indian politics has become wrapped by its reaction to Imperialism. Labour is made to forget its real enemy namely the vested interest. Both the Royists and the Congress Socialist are trading in this quagmire because confusion of thought. Even if Imperialism is to dealt with as the common enemy, it does not mean that all classes must forget class interests and join in one organization. Imperialism could be fought by the different class organizations making a common front. It is not necessary to dissolve all organizations for this purpose. It is not necessary to have a merger. Common front is quite enough. I am sorry that many people do not seem to realize that the right wing of the Congress is merely using Imperialism as an excuse for preventing separate and Independent organization of labour and I warn you against falling into this error. Politics must be based upon class consciousness. Politics which is not class conscious is hypocrisy.

You must therefore join a political party which is based upon class interests and class consciousness. Applying this test I find no other party than the Independent Labour Party to which you can join without detriment to your interests. It is the only party which has a clear programme, which gives the interests of the workers a first and foremost place, which has a definite line of action which proposes to exhaust all constitutional means

for furthering its programme and will not agree to resort to unconstitutional means unless forced to do so, which is willing to avoid class war but is not prepared to give up the principle of class organization. It is true that the Independent Labour Party is in its infancy and is confined only to the Province of Bombay. But that is no argument against it. Every party at one stage is in its infancy. The question is not how old is the party. The question is what are its principles, what does it stand for, what are its potentialities. Any one who cares to read the manifesto of the Independent Labour Party will know what are its principles and what it stands for. That the party has great potentialities is evident. The party is not a close corporation. It is open to anybody irrespective of caste and creed. It has a programme which although it emphasizes some of the special needs of the Depressed Classes, is wide enough to include the needs of all labouring classes. One of the difficulties in the way of the growth of the Independent Labour Party is social and not political. The fact that its substratum or nucleus consists of the Depressed Classes is the only thing that stands in the way of the growth and expansion of the Party. It is the general feeling of not associating with low class people such as the Depressed Classes, which has prevented caste Hindu workers from joining the fold of the I. L. P. and I am sorry to say that many people who are opposed to the growth of the Independent Labour Party are exploiting this feeling and disuading the ignorant and the superstitious from joining the Party. But I am sure that the straight and honest politics of the Independent Labour Party will work as a powerful magnet to draw all labouring classes within its fold and will counter balance any disruptive force originating from the Hindu social system. Already the Party has completely established itself in the three districts of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri and has secured a footing among peasants and workers. It is making leadway in other parts of the Province. The Party is functioning in the Province of C. P. and Berar and I hope that it will have its place in the rest of the Provinces of India. The Independent Labour Party is therefore the only Party which justifies the support of the labouring classes.

In the organization of labour the Depressed Classes can give a great lead to Labour in general in India. Mr. Gammage, a student of the Chartist Movement in England, has well observed: "It may be doubted whether there ever was a great political movement of the people without a social origin. The chief material object of mankind is to possess the means of social enjoyment. Secure them in possession of these and small is the care they have for political abstractions. It is the existence of great social wrongs which principally teaches the masses the value of political rights." Your wrongs are great, your wrongs are real. Therefore your politics can be genuine and real. If you realize this you can be the beacon light to all Labour in India in the matter of genuine political organization. There is another service you can render to Labour in general. You have an assured quota of representation in the Legislature. Some labour leaders do not seem to realize the advantage to Labour in general which this assured quota of representation gives. Elections are gambles. No system of election can secure to any party in the ordinary way any assured quantum of representation in the Legislature. Nor can any system of election give to any body of voters representation in proportion to the number. The history of elections in England will show how surprising and disastrous are the results of elections to the different parties. Often a minority of voters obtain a majority of seats. Such disasters are avoided in our system of assured quotas. And so far as the assured quota of representation to the Depressed Classes is concerned it is an advantage not to the Depressed Classes only but to Labour as a whole. The Depressed Classes being sure of representation can give great support to other labouring classes in their attempt for political organization if they care to avail themselves of this support. How great can be the support of the Depressed Classes to Labour in general for securing political representation to Labour is proved in the last election. The Depressed Classes were able to elect three representatives of caste Hindus to the Bombay Legislative Assembly who stood on the I. L. P. ticket and rendered help to several others who did not stand on its ticket but who were approved by the party. Those who care to profit by our efforts may do so. But the fact remains that the Depressed Classes by themselves can play a great part in

the politics of this country and a part which can be very helpful to themselves and to Labour in general.

All this however depends upon how well and how quickly you organize yourselves. I have told you why you must organize and what you can do by organisation. I will now close by telling you, begin your organization and wait not till you achieve it. I thank you for the honour you have done me in asking me to preside at this Conference and I wish you all success. "¹

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¹: Booklet Printed at the Bharat Bhushan Printing Press, 57, Vincent Road, Dadar Bombay No. 14.

EDUCATED MAN WITHOUT CHARACTER AND HUMILITY IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A BEAST

The Bombay Province Depressed Classes Youth Conference was held on 12th February 1938 at 8 p. m. under the President-ship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the vast pandal erected for G. I. P. Railway Depressed Class Workmen's Conference. After the welcome¹ speech by Shri Murlidhar Pagare, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered a very instructive, inspiring and thrilling speech.

He said,

"The rule in life, he said, they should keep in mind, was that they must cherish a noble ideal. Whatever might be one's ideal either of national progress or of self-development, he continued, one should patiently exert oneself to reach it. He observed that all great things in the world were achieved by patient industry and by undergoing toil and tribulations. He further said that one should concentrate one's mind and might on one's goal. Man must eat to live and should live and work for the well-being of society.

Turning then to the problem of education, Dr. Ambedkar said that education was a sword and being a double-edged weapon, was dangerous to wield. An educated man without character and humility was more dangerous than a beast. If his education was detrimental to the welfare of the poor, he remarked, the educated man was a curse to society. Fire upon such an educated man !" "Character is more important," he emphasized, "than education. It pains me to see youths growing indifferent to religion. Religion is not an opium as it is held by some. What good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society, I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion but I do not want hypocrisy in the name of religion." The conference was a great success. It showed that, given a chance, the Depressed Class leaders also could organize the masses. "²

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¹ : Janata, dated 26th February 1938.

² : Keer, P. 305.

UNTOUCHABLES HAVE TO STRIVE THEMSELVES

" Under the auspices of the *Somvamshiya Hitakaraka Samaj* and the Untouchable residents of Tadvadi, Mazgaon, a public meeting was held on March 19th, 1938 at Tadvadi Mazgaon, to present an address and a purse to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Dr. P. G. Solanki, the leaders of the Independent Labour Party. R. K. Tatnis, Editor, *Vividh-Vritta* presided. He, M. N. Talpade, S. T. Gaikwad and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar made speeches in Marathi. About 500 persons including about 100 women attended the meeting.

The President, M. N. Talpade and S. T. Gaikwad, during the course of their speeches recalled the services of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Dr. P. G. Solanki towards the cause of the Untouchables. An address and a purse was then presented by the President to Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. P. G. Solanki was not present as he was reported to be ill.

Replying to the address, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stated that the Untouchables had to strive for their uplift themselves without the help of any other individual or organisation. The Congress organisation, though it professed to help the cause of the Untouchable, did not do anything. Not only that but such organisations did quite the contrary. This was evidenced by the remission of the sentence passed on one Mahomedan for a heinous offence of rape on an Untouchable girl in the Central Provinces. He then stressed the need of a Hall for Untouchables in Bombay and appealed to the audience to subscribe for the same. He stated that it was easy for him to collect the requisite amount by approaching persons like Birla or Bajaj. But he did not want to do that and thus unnecessarily give them an upper hand. He then announced that the purse presented to him would go towards the funds of the Independent Labour Party.

The function started at about 10-30 p. m. and concluded peacefully at about 12-30 a. m.

(Sd.) ,
 Superintendent, S. B., C.I.D.
 22nd March 1938."¹

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¹ : Source Material, Vol. I, Pp. 170-171.

LEAD DECENT LIFE

" Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the Konkan Panchmahal Mahar Conference at Kankavli, district Ratnagiri, on May 14th 1938. About 1,500 persons attended. He deplored the miserable condition of the Mahars and advised them to lead a decent life and do take full advantage of their legal rights such as the use of public wells and *Dharmashalas*, education etc. He asked them to join the Independent Labour Party as the Congress had not done any good for the Depressed Classes consisting as it did mainly of Brahmins and merchants who were responsible for their poverty. He said that he was not so desirous of driving away British Imperialism from India as he was of driving away the rich element from the Congress. Lastly he exhorted them to support the Khoti system Abolition Bill.

Among others, a resolution was passed supporting the *Mahar Watan Bill* and Khoti system Abolition Bill which had been sponsored in the Legislative Assembly by Dr. Ambedkar.

(Sd.) Superintendent S. B., C. I. D.

30th May 1938. "1

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1: The Bombay Secret Abstract, dated 21st May 1938.

GOVERNMENT DID NOT CARE DEPRESSED CLASSES

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed a meeting at the Premabhai Hall, in Ahmedabad while halting there on 22/23 October 1938.

“ He admitted that he was opposed to Gandhi in politics. It was because he had no faith in Gandhi; he did not believe that Gandhi would do good to the Depressed Classes. He said if Gandhi was sincere why should he not ask the Premiers of Bombay and C.P. to include representatives of the Depressed Classes in their ministries ? He maintained that the Congress Government of Bombay was not reducing the land revenue, nor was it prepared to tax the rich. The former Government had recommended the grant of waste lands to the Depressed Classes for cultivation, recruitment of the Depressed Classes in the police services and a certain percentage of reservation in Government Departments for the Depressed Classes. But the Congress Government did not care for them. ”¹

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1 : keer, Pp. 311-312.

NEED FOR UNITED POLITICAL ORGANISATION TO FIGHT COMMON OPPONENT FOREIGN IMPERIALISM

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar gave a reception to Swami Sahajanand, President of the All-India Kisan Sabha on Sunday afternoon, on 25th December 1938 when a number of Labour leaders, Radicals and Journalists were also invited.

Dr. Ambedkar declared in his speech,

"I am willing to give it in writing that the Independent Labour Party and I as its spokesman, will join the Indian National Congress in any struggle that it may start to fight the Federation."

"I am prepared to give it in writing that if the Congress Ministers resigned office in protest against Federation, the Independent Labour Party will not take up the vacant posts and will use all its power and influence to prevent others from running the administrative machinery."

"I fully realise that we are the most hungry dogs in India. We are the most down-trodden, poverty-stricken, oppressed people. We suffer from injustices of a type from which no other class suffers. But we shall set aside our differences with the higher classes for the moment. We shall postpone insisting on our class demands and shall join the Congress, if it decided to fight Imperialism."

The declaration arose out of the remark made by Swami Sahajanand that all should join Congress.

He held that the Congress was an anti-Imperialist organisation, that it had traditions of struggle against Imperialism, which could be claimed by no other political party, that its name and objects were known to millions of workers and peasants all over the country and no other political organisation was known and that it could be rescued from its present leadership by building up class consciousness of the masses.

" I can understand the need for a united political organisation of all classes of people of this country in their endeavour to fight their common opponent foreign Imperialism. I shall support the temporary liquidation of all political organisations in the event of a fight against the common foe. I shall be glad to wind up the Independent Labour Party and place my forces at the disposal of the Indian National Congress if it were to launch such a struggle.

Said Dr. Ambedkar in reply : "but what is the position to-day? The Congress is not engaged in an anti-Imperialist struggle. It is using the consitutional machinery to advance the interests of capitalists and other vested interests; it is engaged in bolstering them up by sacrificing the interests of workers and peasants.

" Its administrative activities have evoked encomiums not from the masses, but from Imperialism itself which the Congress is supposed to be fighting.

" When the Congress is thus busy exploiting even the fragmentary powers that it has secured in advancing its class interests it becomes our obvious duty to set up our own class organisation to protect our interests and to resist encroachments on our rights and liberties by Congress or any other ministries. It would be suicidal for us to join the Congress at such a stage."

Swami Sahajanand's main contention seemed to be that it was wrong leadership that was responsible for the present policy of the Congress, that the policy could be changed by overthrowing the present leadership and by installing the leadership of the masses, and that it had not been overthrown so far because the masses were not class-conscious.

Our main task to-day is to create class-consciousness among masses and then the present leadership would collapse automatically.

" And even if we are able to capture the Congress " said Dr. Ambedkar, "there is nothing to prevent the present leadership from forming another organisation and thus frustrating the main purpose of capturing the Congress, which is to have one political organisation in the whole country."

To all these objections Swamiji's reply was that it was the Congress that rousen the masses, and it was on the Congress alone that they could lay their trust and confidence.

" This nation has got to be freed from foreign domination first, and all available forces must be united for that purposes, he said, " and the Congress with all its past experiences and traditions is best able to do it. "

It was at this stage that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leader of the Independent Labour Party, made the statement quoted above that he and his party were prepared to join in any movement that the Congress may start to fight Federation or to end Imperialism, that his party would not accept ministries if the congress vacated then and would prevent others using the ministerial offices to buttress the constitution.

Swami Sahajanand was tremendously impressed by this declaration and said that whatever the present Congress leaders might say or do the fight against imperialism was not far off."¹

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¹. The Bombay Chronicle, dated 27th December 1938. .
Venue of the reception is not mentioned in the Press Report - Editors.

SEND GRIEVANCES TO ME

" The Conference, attended by about 200 persons from Aurangabad District, was held at Makaranpur, district East Khandesh on 30th December 1938 under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The Conference was held there as it could not be held in the Nizam's Domination for want of permission and it was the first Conference of its kind. The attitude of Muslims to Untouchables in the State was condemned. Dr. Ambedkar who was the principal speaker told his audience to send a list of their grievances to him and also that they should form an Independent Labour Party in the State.

Among others, the following resolutions were passed :---

1. giving Watan land to Mahars,
2. reservation of seats for Untouchables,
3. observance of " Dr. Ambedkar Day" on 14th April every year, and
4. supporting the declaration of Dr. Ambedkar of leaving the Hindu religion, as the Untouchables did not believe in *Hindu Maha Sabha*, *Arya Samaj* or the Congress."¹

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¹: Bombay Secret Abstract, dated 14th January 1939.

BE MEN OF STERLING CHARACTER

For the first time since the Government Inquiry Committee on Labour Strike on November 7 last began its sittings a direct attack on the nature of evidence that is being led before it was made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Leader of the Independent Labour Party. The occasion was the annual parade of the Volunteer Corps of the Party, held on Sunday, the 8th January 1939, morning on the Kamagar Maidan when over 2,500 volunteers turned up smartly dressed and over 20,000 members and followers of the Party thronged the ground to witness the function.

On this occasion Dr. Ambedkar said,

" I shall not go into details of the evidence that is being led before the Committee at present because the Committee is still sitting and the procedure is in a sense '*sub judice*'. But I must show to the world the nature and traditions of the volunteer corps of the Independent Labour Party against which foul and venomous charges are being made day after day by all sorts of witnesses before the Committee."

I shall quote only to instances when fulsome praise was showered on the Volunteer Corps, not by our friends and sympathisers, but by the Congress bosses.

After quoting the tributes paid by Hon. Mr. Kher and Sardar Patel to his volunteers, Dr. Ambedkar said :

" Further, most of our volunteers and men have served in the military for a number of years. They are no lawless illbehaved rabble out for hooliganism and mischief. They realise their responsibilities and believe in disciplined behaviour. Are these the men who will indulge in the kind of infamous activity attributed to them by the witnesses ? "

Addressing the volunteers direct Dr. Ambedkar said :

" This volunteer corps was born in the struggle started for the assertion of human rights by the Depressed Classes which culminated in the Mahad *Satyagraha*. "

" For the proper discharge of that duty you have to be men of sterling character to whom the rest of society will look to as models of humanity. "

" You must remember that you are not a crowd or a mob. You are a battalion. And the difference between the two is obvious. A handful of well-trained, well-disciplined men like you are able to control a crowd of thousands. That is the essence of the difference "between you and an ordinary crowd."

" Dr. Ambedkar wound up with a fervent appeal to other young men to join the corps and to increase its strength."

On behalf of the General Officer Commanding of the Volunteer Corps Mr. D. V. Pradhan expressed the hope that they would be able to open branches of the Corps in other provinces in India in the same manner that they had done in various parts of the province of Bombay.¹

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¹: Bombay Chronicle, dated 10th January 1939

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF INDIA'S POLITICAL EVOLUTION ?

Dr. Ambedkar Condemns Federation

" Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Independent Labour Party, Bombay, made a studied exposition of the Federal Scheme in the course of a three-hour long speech at the Gokhale School of Economics in *Poona on sunday night* the 29th January 1939.

First, the Federal Scheme far from leading the Country to Independence would block the way permanently even to Dominion Status.

Dr. Ambedkar wanted that they should have only a Federation of the British Indian Provinces.

As regards the States he wanted that the rulers of the smaller States should be pensioned off and those of the bigger States should be allowed to function under certain conditions.

The Federal Scheme, according to him, completely forgot the freeman and the poor who constituted the most important factor of national polity.

The following is the summary of the address delivered by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar :

In order to present a clear idea of the real character of the Federation, Dr. Ambedkar undertook a comparison of the Federation with other Federations and he instituted the comparison with reference to three vital questions viz. (i) What are the units of the Federations, (ii) What is the relationship of these units to the Federation, (iii) What is the relationship of the people who are brought under the sovereignty of the Federation.

In this connection he observed ". Federation is not one common whole with a common citizenship. The Federation is a collection of which in law are foreign States. The Federation is really a Con-federation. The peculiarities and the characteristics which it bears are those of a Confederation. If

people insist upon calling it a Federation then it is not only a monster among Federations, but it is also a monstrosity among Federations."

Dr. Ambedkar next proceeded to examine the grounds which had been urged in favour of the acceptance of the scheme. viz. that----

(i) it helps to unite India.

(ii) that it enables British India to influence Indian India and to gradually transform the autocracy prevalent in Indian India into democracy existing in British India.

(iii) that the scheme embodies what it is called responsible government.

In connection with (i) he pointed out that not all that is comprised under the term Indian India was brought under the Federation. Reading S. 6 (i) with Schedule 1 of the Act it was not open to every State to join the Federation with the result that 498 States still remain outside the Federation and can never become part of the Federation. Why are these States excluded from the Federation, what is their position and destiny, asked Dr. Ambedkar.

Dealing with (ii) Dr. Ambedkar came to the conclusion that the States were placed by law in a position to control the affairs of British India and by the same law British India was disabled from exercising any influence over the States. In his opinion the Federal scheme did not help, indeed it hindered British India from setting up in motion processes which would result in the democratization of the Indian States.

On the other hand it helped the Indian States to destroy democracy in British India.

As regards the (iii) he observed that the responsibility did not extend to Defence and Foreign Affairs and that the scheme of responsibility in the Federation as compared with the system of Dyarchy in the Provinces was designed to yield less

responsibility. "Whichever way you look at the Federal Scheme and analyse as you may the provisions relating to responsibility you will see that the real responsibility there is none." said Dr. Ambedkar.

Referring to "the Bane of the Federal Scheme" Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to expose what he considered the greatest deficiency in the constitution. There is no one, he said, who did not recognise that the scheme was full of defects.

He proceeded, "The difference of opinion arises only when the question is asked, what shall we do about it, the answer to the question might be postponed but it cannot be avoided. The question is, in what respects we should require the constitution to be amended ?" Dr. Ambedkar took as the starting point the statement issued by Mr. Satyamurti setting forth the minimum changes which Parliament must make forthwith in the Federal Constitution if it is to be acceptable to the Congress. "Should these changes suffice to alter the present attitude of rejection into one of acceptance of the Federal Scheme ?" asked Dr. Ambedkar.

In his view the objections to the Federal Scheme will not be removed in the least even if British Parliament were ready to grant every one of the demands made by Mr. Satyamurti. To him the fundamental question was whether this Federal Scheme was capable of so evolving that in the end India will reach her goal. It was from this point of view, he pointed out that the scheme must be examined. "What is the goal of India's political evolution?" Dr. Ambedkar asked.

According to Dr. Ambedkar Dominion status was impossible under the Federal Constitution because the constitution is fixed and rigid and even the parliament had no power to alter the Federal Constitution without destroying the Federal Scheme altogether.

Referring to the argument that constitution created autonomous provinces and therefore some binding force must be provided, he agreed that the establishment of a Central Government was imperative and that without it autonomy would result in

anarchy. But he thought the argument went beyond its scope if it sought to justify the establishment of Central Government for All-India. In his opinion the creation of autonomous provinces did not require the creation of Central Government for the whole of India; all that was necessary was that Central Government for British India shall be federal in form. Why was it necessary to bring in the States he asked? Government of India Act, 1935, he pointed out, established two distinct Federations—a Federation of British India Provinces along with an All-India Federation. There was no difference between their legislative and financial powers or in their individual organisation. There was only one vital difference.

While there was British India Federation only there was no responsibility at the center—there is to be no responsibility at the centre so long as there was no All-India Federation. That meant that the entry of the States was a condition precedent for the grant of responsibility to British India why was the entry of the States so essential? he asked. His answer was, "To put it bluntly, the motive is to use the Princes to support Imperial Interests and curb the rising tide of the Democracy in British India." He saw no other explanation, Dr. Ambedkar remarked. "What a price has been paid for the entry of the Federation?"

Not only British India has not been able to secure responsibility at the center commensurate with the sacrifice it has made for making Federation easy for the Princes, but it has lost its claim for Dominion Status in its own right and independently of the Princes.

Of the two parts of the Federation, British India is the progressive part and the States form the unprogressive part. That the progressive part should be tied up to the chariot of the unprogressive and the path and destiny should be made dependent on the unprogressive part constitutes the most tragic side of Federation.

Dr. Ambedkar lastly considered Federation from different points of view, from the point of view of the Princes, the Hindus and the Muslims. The interest of the Princes. according to the Doctor were two-fold. They wanted to escape Paramountcy and they did not want to subject themselves too much to the authority of the Federation.

In looking at the Federation the Princes kept two questions before them How far would this Federation enable them to escape the tyranny of Paramountcy, and secondly, how far did the scheme take away their sovereignty of their powers of internal Government ? "They want to draw more under the former and to give less under the latter" said Dr. Ambedkar.

In this connection Dr. Ambedkar asserted that there were other points of view besides those mentioned which must have their say. He pointed out that there was the point of view of the freeman, and of the poor man. The Federation did not seem to take any account of them and yet they were people who were most concerned.

Dr. Ambedkar asserted, "This Federation if it comes into being will be a standing menace to freeman and an obstacle in the way of the poor man."

Concluding Dr. Ambedkar said the vastness of the subject was the reason for the length of his address. He was also persuaded not to cut matters short being reminded of the days when people of India were led by men like Ranade, Tilak, Agarkar, Gokhale, Dadabhoy, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Bannerji. If notable figures in Indian Political firmament. a group of well-clad and well-read politicians who relied on study and experience.

Today their places were taken by voice."¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 31st January 1939.

GANDHI PREPARED TO ACCEPT FEDERATION IN WHATEVER FORM

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leader of the Independent Labour Party while presiding over the Bijapur District Harijan Conference at Bijapur on 12th February 1939 said,

" I cannot understand Mr. Gandhi's opposition to Mr. Bose on the issue of Federation. It can be construed in two ways : either Mr. Gandhi must have made up his mind to accept Federation unconditionally, or he must be diffident about his weapon of *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha*. He seems to have prepared to accept Federation in whatever form."

He strongly criticised Federation which, he believed, would never improve matters, but on the other hand, would lead to chaos and worsen the situation in India. He said that he could prove to the hilt that there was no honesty left in the Congress, which was entirely in the hands of a clique. He was sure he would have secured a unique position in the Congress by flattering Mr. Gandhi, if he wished. He knew perfectly well that the present policy of the Congress would never lead them to *Purna Swaraj*, he had therefore no mind to join the Congress. He had started a separate party a few days before the last Assembly election and called it the Independent Labour Party. It had been gaining strength ever since. His main object in coming to Bijapur was to start a branch of his party there."¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 15th February 1939.

SAVE YOUR CHILDREN FROM HARROWING LIFE

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leader of the Independent Labour Party, in the course of his speech at a meeting of the 'Kuchrapatti' workers held on Sunday evening the 26th February 1939 at Chembur, Bombay when a purse of Rs. 1001 was presented to him as a contribution of the workers for the fund for raising building for headquarters of the Party.

Dr. Ambedkar said,

The noteworthy change that has come about in the social and psychological outlook of the Depressed Classes during the past decade or so.

Referring direct to the audience he said,

"You are the people who are ordained by destiny to deal with the dirt and filth of the thirteen lakhs of the people of Bombay. Your whole life is spent in the midst of this squalor.

But let everyone of these present here see to it that at least your children are saved from this harrowing life, that they are better educated than you are that they lead a more happy, comfortable and civilised life than you have been destined to do."

Dr. Ambedkar thanked all those who had contributed to the Building Fund of the Independent Labour Party and hoped that other working class centres would follow the lead given by Chembur and enable the Party to start the building work as soon as possible.

Among the speakers who preceded Dr. Ambedkar were Mr. G. M. Jadhav, Principal Donde, Mr. Gaikwad, the Depressed Class representative from Nasik in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, Dr. Deorukhkar, Mr. D. V. Pradhan presided.¹



¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 28th February 1939.

I WORKED FOR BENEFIT OF WHOLE COMMUNITY NOT FOR A PARTICULAR SECTION

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar addressing a meeting of the *Rohidas Sikshan Samaj* held at the R. M. Bhat High School, Parel, Bombay on Sunday the 2nd July 1939 said,

"That he favoured the abolition of sub-castes among the Depressed Classes and honestly worked to that end. He further said that the question of marriage was not one that could be settled by force. It was not that a Mahar girl, he observed, and a Chamar boy or a Mang boy should be married perforce as if by waving a magic wand. It was upto them to encourage those men who showed courage to perform such marriages. Referring to the political problem, he said that the Congress leaders were shrewdly bringing about a rift among the Depressed Classes by encouraging some Depressed Class leaders against his Party. He appealed to them not to fall prey to the Congress false propaganda. Congress leaders were cajoling the Harijan leaders, he added, because he was not there in the Congress camp. He stated that it was a fact that the I.L.P. drew its major following from the Mahars. But it was, he explained, not his fault that the Mahars had a majority in the Depressed Classes.* In his concluding remarks, however, he stated that to get rid of those sectional feelings the only way out was to embrace another religion."¹

However there were additional dimentions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar which were covered by 'The Times of India'. The dimentions were as under : *Editors*.

"It was regrettable that there should be difference of opinion among the different sections of the Depressed Classes but the work that he did, was not meant for a particular section but for the benefit of the whole community. He never favoured sectional or sectarian ideas or policy in his uplift work.

Dr. Ambedkar added that the Chamar community who kept aloof from the Independent Labour Party was under the impression that

*The Janata, dated 8th July 1939.

¹: Keer, Pp 323-324.

the Congress would improve its lot, but it was mistaken in its faith. He appealed for unity among the different sections.

The president Mr. M.V. Donde, said that the scholarships now offered by Government to the community were inadequate and they should be given more encouragement.

Resolutions to the effect that every district should have a free boarding school for the community and appealing to Government to allow the boys and girls who failed in the recent examinations to appear again for examinations in three months were passed.

The following members were elected office bearers : Mr. K. R. Pavekar (President), Mr. B. J. Devrukar and Mr. B. G. Wagmare (Secretaries) and 40 committee members." ¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 5th July 1939.

TAXES MUST BE UTILISED FOR FARMERS

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was entertained in July 1939 at a tea-party by the authorities of Hansraj P. Thackersey College at Nasik. Replying to questions that were put to him in writing at that function, Dr. Ambedkar said,

“ The money the Government was raising in the form of taxes must be utilised to relieve the farmers of their debts, to fight poverty and to impart education ; but he said that it could not be done if prohibition was given a priority or a preference over these urgent problems. Asked whether he agreed to the zonal scheme sponsored by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan in respect of a division of India, he replied that he did not approve of the seven zones and suspected that it was a step in the direction of establishment of Pakistan. As regards British rule, he expressed his view that apart from all other defects or disabilities, it had conferred two benefits on Indians, namely, one common Central Government, and a feeling among the people belonging to different religions that they were part of one Government. ”¹

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¹ : Keer, P. 324.

MAHAR WATAN IS HEARTLESS EXPLOITATION

To see the prospect of a *Satyagraha* movement and general strike throughout the Province of Bombay for redressal of the numerous grievances of the *Mahar and Mang Watandars* a conference of watandars was held at Ahmednagar* during the week end under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Almost all the Independent Labour Party members of the Legislative Assembly were present.

Tracing the origin of the institution of village Officers Dr. Ambedkar said,

During the Maratha regime there used to be 12 different officers like Patel, Kulkarni, Desai, *Nhavi* (barbar), *Sutar* (carpenter), Musalman, etc. to whom were assigned specific duties for the performance of which they were given lands free of revenue.

With the advent of the British the system of payment through *watan* lands was abolished in all cases except that of the Mahars. People with regular salaries were appointed in their places.

"What is interesting about this process of abolition of the old system" said Dr. Ambedkar, "is that in hundreds of cases the *ex-Patels, Kulkarnis, Talatis*, etc. while relieved of their official duties were allowed to retain their lands and the increase in land revenue that was made in their *watan* lands was only nominal. Thus the Government to-day are virtually paying lakhs of rupees to the decendents of these village officers though they have no village duties to discharge."

As against this was the fate of the *Mahar Watandars*, and almost every *Mahar is a Watandar*. The British did not abolish this hereditary office. The *Mahars* continued to discharge their duties as before but the concessional land revenue of "*Judi*" as it is called was increased.

*At Haregaon, Taluqua Kopargaon Dist. Ahmednagar on 16th December 1939 as published in Janata, dated 23rd December 1939.

Unjust Impost

The matter was investigated by Government and by an act passed in 1874 it was laid down that *watan* lands could not be alienated nor burden on them increased unless it was in the interest of the *Mahar Watandars* themselves. In spite of this the Congress Government which claimed to serve the interest of the Depressed Classes and which had scores of other sources to increase their revenues, hit upon this the most poverty-stricken classes to get additional revenues.

"This is not only unjust and inequitable," said the President, "but because it violates the existing law which still remains on the statute book, it is illegal and unconstitutional. And unless the Government realise their folly and cancel the order the *Mahar Watandars* will be compelled to declare a revolt against the authorities and refuse to carry out their village duties.

The President did not want any precipitate action. He wanted to give time to the authorities to rectify the matter and proposed that a six month's notice should be given before direct action was resorted to.

"Why are we so serious about it ? It is because even without the additional burden put by the Congress Government, the *Mahar Watan* system is a system of heartless exploitation."

There was another big hardship from which thousands of *Mahars* suffered. There were innumerable villages in the province where the *Mahars* had to do all the jobs assigned to them without even the *Watan* land or any other sort of payment. In fact it was nothing short of forced and free labour. That had got to be put to an end.

In connection with these and other grievances he proposed that a deputation should be sent to the Governor to present all the facts to him and to secure redressal.

Turning next to the Congress Dr. Ambedkar said,

"It is a good thing that the Congress has revealed itself so soon and that it did not wait till it had secured full *swaraj* when it would have been so terribly difficult to remedy matters."

"We are not going to forget that lesson now. We may not be as strong as the Congress. We may not be as numerical. But we believe in the principle of social life that if we get nothing more than a dry bread to eat that we should share it with our companions. The Congress is not out for a dry bread. It is out for a full feast and wants to enjoy it all for itself. It wants to keep others starving."

"Well, we may not be able to snatch the dishes out of their hands. But there is one thing we can do we can pick up a handful of dust and fling it while they are at feast."¹

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1. : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 19th December 1939.

GOVERNMENT HAS DONE NOTHING FOR DEPRESSED CLASSES

" This conference was held under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at Ankalkhop village, Satara district, on December 24th 1939 and was attended by 2,000 persons. Speakers praised the work of Dr. Ambedkar for the Depressed Classes and urged that he should be given support.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the Congress Government had done nothing for the Depressed Classes but on the contrary had enhanced revenue cess on *Inami* and *Maharki* lands. There should be a limit to the amount of village work expected of *Mahars* who should be suitably remunerated. Unless their grievances were redressed within 6 months, *Mahars* should be prepared to discontinue."¹

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¹ : The Bombay Secret Abstract : 6th January 1940.

HINDUS RESPONSIBLE FOR SIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY

"Dr. Ambedkar was presented with an address of welcome by Belgaum Municipality at Belgaum on December 26, 1939.

Replying to the address, Dr. Ambedkar said that Caste Hindus and none else were responsible for the sin of Untouchability, which he was trying to remove by working for the uplift of Harijans. The question of tackling the problem of Harijans was more urgent than even that of winning *Swaraj*."¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 27th December 1939.

REGAIN PAST POSITION IN ARMY

On January 28th* 1940, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar visited Ratnagiri where he was welcomed by the newly enrolled 'Mahar Army' recruits with military status. On this occasion he gave a brief speech to all touchable Kunbis as well as Untouchable soldiers.¹

An appeal to Kunbis and Mahars to come forward and join the Army was made by Dr. Ambedkar, when a number of Mahars recently enrolled as recruits came in a body last evening to pay their respect to him as their leader.

Dr. Ambedkar expressed appreciation of their decision to enrol. Military occupation, he said, was closed to them on account of caste prejudices, although they had rendered good service in the past. At one time practically 3/4th of the Bombay army was drawn from the Mahars and they had fought a great many battles on the side of the British, including the famous battle of Koregaon, when the Peshwa was defeated and the British established their supremacy.

After the mutiny of 1857, he went on, other classes joined the Army. Their prejudices had to be respected and the recruitment of Mahars was therefore stopped. The new recruits had thus the responsibility to regain their past position in the army.²

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¹ : Janata, dated 10th February 1940.

² : The Times of India, dated 31st January 1940.

*As per 'Janata' the date is 28th January 1940. Whereas in the Press Report the date was shown as 29th. --Editors.

SAFEGUARDS UNDER GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT AND POONA PACT ARE INADEQUATE

" A rally of over 40,000 men and women was held at Mazagaon on Sunday night the 4th February 1940 under the presidentship of Mr. S. C. Joshi.

The rally was the culmination point of the five-mile long procession which started from Dr. Ambedkar's residence to honour Mr. Surendranath Tipnis, Chairman of the Kolaba District Branch of the Independent Party, who was released from Thana jail on Saturday morning after undergoing imprisonment for three months in connection with a speech, which advocated abolition of the *Khoti* system.

Most of the district leaders of the Party and Party-members of the Assembly as also volunteer corps--about a thousand strong--participated in the procession which wended its way amidst slogans and cheers through crowded working class localities.

While addressing the rally Dr. Ambedkar, Leader of the Independent Labour Party, said,

The safeguards provided under the Government of India Act and the Poona Pact had proved totally inadequate to protect the interests of the Depressed Classes and that these classes would soon have to direct their attention to formulate concrete proposals and conditions of an elaborate and comprehensive nature on which alone any future co-operation with the administration would be possible."¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 6th February 1940.

HINDU SOCIETY MUST ORGANISE ON MODERN LINES BREAKING DOWN ITS AGE-LONG FRAMEWORK

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared on 19th March as Independence day for Untouchables. This was the day of 1927 when a historical meeting of Untouchables was held at Mahad, where Dr. Ambedkar declared the three principles of democracy i.e. liberty equality and fraternity. To Commemorate that a special function, "Untouchables Independence day", was organised at Mahad on 19th March 1940 on behalf of Independent Labour Party. A special handbill was published for this occasion. Accordingly the Depressed Classes observed March 19, 1940 as their Independence day—"¹

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed a rally of 10,000 people at Mahad." In the course of his speech he observed.

"It was entirely wrong for the Indians to concentrate all their attention on political independence of the country and forget the foremost social and economic problems. He said that it was high time that Hindu society were organised on modern lines breaking down its age-long framework." At night an address of welcome was presented to Dr. Ambedkar by the Mahad Municipality.²

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¹: Janata, 23rd and 30th March 1940.

²: Keer, P. 331.

GANDHI'S EFFORTS ARE INADEQUATE

About 3,000 persons attended a *Mahar and Mang Vatandars'* Conference which was held at Tadval (Doki), Sholapur district, on February 23rd 1941 under the presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar, who was the chief speaker, explained the inadequacy of Gandhi's efforts to secure an improvement in the status of Harijans. He praised the administrations of Mysore and Baroda States for their treatment of Harijans but suggested that in Hyderabad State extended facilities for Harijans were necessary. Dr. Ambedkar also appealed for contributions for his building fund. A purse of Rs. 761 was presented."¹

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¹ : Bombay Secret Abstract, dated 8th March 1941.

**WITHOUT STRENUOUS EFFORTS
OUR SOCIAL POSITION MIGHT GET
EVEN WORSE**

" A stringent attack on the working of the *Panchayats* of the *Mahar* community in the city was directed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the presence of many of the prominent members of the *Panchayats* at a public meeting of the Depressed Classes held in the Bhatt High School Hall, Bombay, last night, the 28th March 1941 to consider the financial position of the Depressed Class students' Hostel at Thana.

The *Panchayats* had been levying taxes of all sorts and under various pretexts on the community, he said. Most of that money used formerly to be spent on drinking bouts. But now that prohibition was introduced in the city the money was being spent on eating "*battasas*" and distributing sweets.

" What has come over you, the elders and senior members of the community "asked Dr. Ambedkar, "that you should behave like children and want to indulge in sweets purchased out of public funds while the community has to face increasing competition with other communities in the struggle for life. Unless we discard these childish activities and take to the serious work of the social and educational advancement our position might get even worse than it is to-day. "

Dr. Ambedkar held before the Depressed Classes the example of the advanced Indian communities. Among the advanced communities, he said, there were always a number of men who devoted themselves exclusively and life-long to educational and other social institutions in their communities without any hope of reward or even appreciation.

Among educated youths of the Depressed Classes, however, the speaker witnessed the tendency to look out for seats on local boards,

municipalities and similar other positions and if they did not get these--and all of them could not possibly get these--then they gave up all interest in public work and sunk into total indifference to the fate of the community.

There were others who were so unsteady in their public work that they nibbled at one type of work for some time, then turned on to another, then shifted to third one, leaving every institution they handle in a chaotic condition. "¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 29th March 1941.

**YOU HAVE NOT REALISED
WHAT TREMENDOUS POWER
YOU HAVE**

"Stringent criticism of the manner in which some of the labour unions in the city were conducted was made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the course of his Presidential remarks at the annual general meeting of the Bombay Municipal Kamgar Union held on 13th July 1941 in the Cowasji Jahangir Hall, Bombay where over a thousand men and women of the Health, Drainage and other sanitary department of the municipality had gathered and were told how they could get everything they wanted by the mere force of organised unity and without overmuch sacrifice.

The leaders of some of the union in the city, specially the textile unions had led their men into a number of strikes during the last 14 years, said Dr. Ambedkar, but not in one of them had they succeeded in getting any of their demands. In fact these strikes had only resulted, because of unemployment during strike periods and retrenchments and dismissals following strikes, in adding to the woes and miseries of the workers.

Such activities, far from organising the workers had only resulted in disorganising them and disintegrating their unions.

On the other hand the Municipal Workers Union had succeeded in getting many of the grievances redressed by negotiations with the authorities.

"You do not seem to realise the tremendous power you have in your hand", observed the Harijan leader. "You can, simply by refusing to work, spread more havoc and disaster in a week than the Hindu-Muslim riots should do in three months. The authorities know this and will therefore yield to your united demands more easily than elsewhere. I have of course no desire to spread such a havoc in the city and will do everything possible to avoid it as long as the authorities

concede our just demands. All that I say is that you must unite in the Union, and that fact, combined with the competent and energetic leadership you have in the Managing Committee will do the rest of the job.

Dr. Ambedkar then referred to the position secured by the Depressed Classes in the political life of the country as a result of unity and said that this class which had no political status ten years ago ranked equal with the Congress and the League to-day because of unity.

Finally he exhorted the Depressed Classes in general to enroll themselves in the Assembly electoral roll.

In this connection he recalled how in the last Assembly elections in the constituency from which he contested (North Bombay) there were only 8,000 Harijans against 48,000 caste Hindu voters and he almost felt that he had tied a halter round his neck in standing from such a constituency. The Depressed Class voters, however, rallied to the polling booth to a man and achieved what was a miracle in electioneering.

Mr. D. V. Pradhan, General Secretary of the Union, read at the outset the annual report which recorded a year of all round progress.

Resolutions passed :

Resolutions demanding increase in dearness allowance by one rupee and making the allowance applicable to all workers getting upto Rs. 75 per month; urging on the committee appointed by the Corporation to report on the housing and living conditions of Municipal labour to expedite its report; and making some minor changes in the constitution of the Union, were then moved and sanctioned by the general body. Among the speakers on the resolutions were Messrs M. V. Donde, M. Kavli and G. M. Jadhav.

A new Managing Committee with Dr. Ambedkar as President and Messrs M. V. Donde and S. B. Keni, as Vice-Presidents was then elected on the proposition moved by Mr. D. V. Pradhan.

Mr. M. V. Jadhav, Assistant Secretary, then explained how communalism was being exploited among workers and how the Gujarati Depressed Class workers like Bhāngis, etc. had kept themselves aloof from the Union though they were getting all advantages such as increase in wages, etc., secured as a result of the Union's activities. "¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 15th July 1941.

WATANDARI, A CURSE TO MAHARS

" Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presided over a meeting of about 4,000 persons which was held at Sinnar, Nasik district, on August 16th, 1941. Dr. Ambedkar stated that in accordance with the decision of the Haregaon Conference in December 1939, a memorial had been submitted to His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, but to no effect. He alleged that Mahars and Mangs had not been accorded equality of treatment with other *watandars* but that the Judi tax on their *watan* lands had been increased. He, therefore, advised Mahars and Mangs to resist the collection of the increased tax and not to relinquish possession of their lands under any circumstances."¹

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the subject which were reported by the Bombay Chronicle. The dimensions were :

" Thundering speeches calling upon the Mahar, Mang and Vethia *watandars* of Maharashtra to resist by every means within their power the collection of the additional land revenue levied on *watan* lands, characterised the mass meeting of the *watandars* held here last night under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar."

Decision to resist the collection of the tax was a logical sequel to them.

" During my entire public career I have remained consistently loyal to the British Government in India, " said Dr. Ambedkar in the course of his Presidential address.

" I have been loyal to the British because the Depressed Classes, surrounded by enemies on all sides, could not afford to fight on all the fronts at the same time. I, therefore, decided to fight the two thousand year old-tyranny and oppression of the caste Hindus and to secure social equality for the Depressed Classes before everything else."

¹: The Bombay Secret Abstract, dated 23rd August 1941.

"I have directed for these many years bitter and virulent attacks on the Hindu society and its numerous evils, but I can assure you that I shall direct attacks a hundred-fold more bitter, more virulent, more deadly against the British than I have ever done against the Hindus if my loyalty is going to be exploited for crushing my own people and taking away from them the last dry bone from which they draw their barest sustenance."

"I want to tell the British authorities that their rule over this province is due to us, that it was the Mahar regiments that destroyed the Peshwa rule and established British *raj* in this province.

The Mahars won Maharashtra for the British. What did they get for the services? Nothing.

This *watandari* has become a curse to the Mahars. It ties them down to eternal poverty. It saps their self-respect. It keeps them degraded.

All that we say is "We don't want your *watandari*. Relieve us from your service. Levy the full land revenue on our lands and engage men on the basis of monthly payment as you have done for other village services.

That has been my demand for these 20 years. What do we get instead? Far from being relieved of the services, additional duties are imposed on the *watandars* and additional "judi" levied on them.

It is a monstrosity that I will not tolerate. I challenge the British authorities to do their worst.

I tell them here and finally that they will not get a pie of the additional duty from us. Let them do their worst.

As for you, *watandars*, my instructions are plain. You must resist payment of the additional duty no matter what the consequences. If they attach your household goods, or your cattle you must do everything to prevent their taking away the goods and cattle.

Whatever happens we will see to it that the Government climb down. There is no going back on our decision, no faltering in the execution of the decision.

After the Presidential address two resolutions were passed one supporting the memorandum* sent to the Governor by Dr. Ambedkar on the question of Mahar *watandari* and the other calling upon the *watandars* to resist collection of the additional "Judi" by every means within their powers.

Among the speakers on the resolutions were Messrs R. R. Bhole, B. H. Varade, J. S. Aindale, P. J. Roham, D. G. Jadhav, B. K. Gaikwad and A. V. Chitre, all members of the Bombay Legislative Assembly representing Poona, Belgaum, Sholapur, Ahmednagar, Khandesh, Nasik and Kolaba districts respectively.

Each of them offered the fullest possible support of the Mahars from their district to any movement that the Nasik district might start and if necessary, to start *Satyagraha* on their own districts if the authorities did not yield in time.

In his concluding speech Dr. Ambedkar corrected the impression created by some of the previous speakers as to the exact date for starting the movement.

"If there are attachments brought tomorrow your resistance begins tomorrow. There is no waiting, no question of receiving instructions" said Dr. Ambedkar.

"This tax has to be resisted right from the moment attempts are made to collect. Let the *watandars*, therefore, go back with this idea fixed in their minds that the collection of the additional tax has to be resisted from the very first step and at every subsequent step."¹



* See the Memorandum on Pp. 308-338 in part-1 of this Volume---Editors.

¹: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 19th August 1941.

REMARKABLE CHANGE UNDERGONE.

" The remarkable change that the Kasar Wadi area near Dadar has undergone during the past few years and the noteworthy improvement in the Harijan quarters in the locality effected by the Municipality were referred to by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on Wednesday, the *20th August 1941 when a purse was presented to him by the residents of the locality for a building for the Independent Labour Party headquarters for which land worth Rs. 40,000 has already been taken on lease.

Mr. Upsham presenting the purse said that, that was the fourth occasion on which they were presenting the purse for the building fund.

Mr. D. V. Pradhan, General Secretary of the Municipal Kamgar Union who presided, said that he was sorry to refer to the fact that the Gujarati section of the Depressed Classes while sharing to the full the advantages accruing from the activities of the Union was not prepared to share the burden of the Union's activities.

He also announced that the Municipal workers would organise a procession on September 7 to back up their demand for dearness allowance. "¹

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* The date of newspaper '20th' might have been wrongly reprinted.-Editors.

¹: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 20th August 1941.

EDUCATED PERSONS SHOULD JOIN MILITARY

" Under the auspices of the *Mahar* community a public lecture was delivered by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar " on *Mahar* Battalion " at R. M. Bhatt High School, Parel, on September 24th 1941, at about 9-15 p.m. About 500 *Mahars* attended the meeting.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the meeting was held to encourage educated men from his community to join Military. The Government of India had promised him to form a *Mahar* Battalion on account of the great valour shown by the 111, *Mahar* Battalion in the last Great War. He also pointed out that the said Battalion was abolished as the officers of that battalion who were almost high class Hindus and Muslims complained that the soldiers were useless for military work. So this time, the lecturer said he insisted on the Government to appoint *Mahar* Officers in *Mahar* Battalion. Therefore he requested the audience to join Military in general and particularly to those who were educated.

The lecture terminated at about 10 p.m. ¹

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the subject which were reported by the 'Times of India' The dimensions were :

" Dr. Ambedkar stated that in spite of the harsh treatment being meted out to them, on account of the ' *Watandar* ' system pursued in Nasik, Khandesh and other districts of the province by the local Government, this was not the time for *Mahars* to withhold their co-operation. After the last war, the *Mahar* Battalion was disbanded and the *Mahars* who had joined the army were not provided for. Recently, he had made representations to Government that a *Mahar* Battalion should be permanently maintained. The thanks of the community for the success of their cause were due to the Governor of Bombay and the Viceroy.

¹: B. S. A, dated 25th September 1941.

Several *Mahars*, continued Dr. Ambedkar, were now studying in colleges. He appealed to them to suspend their studies and join the army and qualify themselves for King's and Viceroy's commissions. A large number of the rank and file had already joined the army and there was a dearth of educated *Mahars* for officers' ranks. He felt confident that the educated youth of the community would come forward immediately to enlist. "¹

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¹: The Times of India, dated 26th September 1941.

I SHALL LAY DOWN MY LIFE IN DEFENCE OF OUR LAND

“ In the middle of February 1942, there were discussions held at the spring lectures series at Wagle Hall, Bombay. Three days were reserved for the discussion on *Thoughts On Pakistan*. Dr. Ambedkar was present at the time of the discussion. Acharya M. V. Donde presided over the meeting. At the express request by Donde, his friend, colleague and an eminent educationist in the Province, Dr. Ambedkar rose to reply to the debate.

He said,

He would not waste his words on those who thought that Pakistan was not a debatable subject at all. If it was thought that the demand was unjust, then the coming of Pakistan would be a terrible thing for them. It was wrong, he said, to tell the people to forget history. “ They cannot make history,” he continued, “ who forget history.” To bring down the preponderance of the Muslims in the Indian army and to make the army safe, it is wise to let out the hostile element. We will defend our land. Do not be under the false impression that Pakistan would be able to spread its Muslim empire over India. The Hindus will make it lick the dust. I confess I have my quarrel with the Caste Hindus over some points, but I take a vow before you that I shall lay down my life in defence of our land.” A thunder of applause greeted his speech.”¹

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¹ : Keer, Pp. 340-341.

YOUR SALVATION MUST LIE IN YOUR OWN HANDS

Leaving the tome-packed loft in which he had buried himself throughout Sunday, the 26th April 1942 busy collecting yet more material for his next bomb-shell. "What the Hindus have Done To Us", the scholarly Dr. B. R. Ambedkar rushed to the Kamgar Maidan, Bombay in the evening to talk of bombs or co-operation.

Presentation of a purse in celebration of his Golden Jubilee was the occasion for the stupendous crowd, which gathered as for a fair but left with a battle-cry from ten thousand resounding throats.

" I don't want celebration of my birthday any more " he declared.

The soothing calm voice of Dr. Ambedkar developed into a thunder as he roared : Most treacherously have the British Government let us down. The Cripps proposals were meant to placate the Congress and the League in the hour of Britain's difficulties and to sacrifice the Depressed Classes. The demands of the Congress and the League were mutually and violently conflicting and the British in accepting the demands of both ensured the total rejection by both. Thank God for it.

The Depressed Classes have been saved from a disaster. But the menace may raise its head again. Next time that happens you will have to be ready for action, I don't care what action, constitutional or unconstitutional, violent or non-violent, peaceful or disturbing.

Offer To Congress

The votary of constitutional practice then gave an inkling into the possibility of his next jubilee being celebrated as a revolutionarv.

He Declared : You may be faced with constituent assembly again. Your place then will not be inside the constituent assembly. You will not find any place there. Your legitimate place then will be in your own headquarters, manufacturing bombs. Yes, bombs make no mistake about it. We can handle hand grenades better than many other people.

To the Congress he has fought these 20 years, he made a sporting offer : You are fighting for *Swaraj*. I am ready to join you. And I may assure you that I can fight better than you. I make only one condition. Tell me what share I am to have in the *Swaraj*. If you don't want to tell me that and want to make up with the British behind my back, hell on both of you.

To the audience present, Dr. Ambedkar spoke like a loving father to his children, telling stories of yore and the happenings during the last 23 years. He was in a reminiscent mood, narrated the episode of the first public meeting he addressed at Kolhapur, the opposition he had to face from his own people who considered loathsome practices as a precious heritage, oppression as a birth-right.

And as Dr. Ambedkar narrated the details of these practices the daintily dressed pretty maids close to the platform turned round and laughed at their wrinkled old mothers. And the mothers felt so embarrassed at the recall of things they had practised so long and abandoned with such reluctance. Said he:

" Today you have been purified of all those evils. Like white snow of an early morning you stand now before the superstition ridden men and women of the higher castes; the Marathas and the Bhandaris, who from the viewpoint of social and cultural outlook are miles behind you.

" When I started on my public career and long thereafter I considered that for good or for evil we were part of the Hindu society.

I thought for long that we could rid the Hindu society of its evils and get the Depressed Classes incorporated into it on terms of equality. That motive inspired the *Mahad Chaudar Tank Satyagraha* and the *Nasik Temple Entry Satyagraha*. With that object we burned the *Manu Smriti* and performed mass thread ceremonies. Experience has taught me better. I stand today absolutely convinced that for the Depressed Classes there can be no equality among the Hindus because on inequality rest the foundations of *Hinduism*.

We no longer want to be part to the Hindu society.

What then are we to do ? We shall decide that at a suitable time. For the moment I only want to make it clear that we cannot be part of the Hindu society in any circumstances. We want to be partners in running the government of this country. We want partition of political rights. Our political rights must be recognised distinctly from those of the Hindus separately.

If the Hindus are prepared to recognise those rights I am ever-ready to join them in the common struggle for the freedom of the country. "

Dr. Ambedkar is no hero-worshipper, does not want his followers to do it either, for he is deeply conscious of the evils of hero-worship and the havoc it has caused in this country down the centuries.

Calmly but emphatically said Dr. Ambedkar : "You have been celebrating my birthday for some 15 years past. I have never attended them. I have always been opposed to them. You have celebrated my golden jubilee now; let that be enough. Let there be no more celebrations.

The reason : "Over-regard for leaders saps self-confidence of the masses, leaves them helpless when left leaderless in hour of trial or when led by unscrupulous leaders."

"One great reason for the downfall of the Hindu society and the perpetuation of its degraded position," said Dr. Ambedkar, " is the injunction of *Krishna* that whenever in difficulties they should look

out for his *avatar* (incarnation) to redeem them from the slouch of despondency. That has made the Hindu community helpless in face of calamity.

I don't want you to follow such a ruinous teaching. I don't want you to be dependent on any single personality for your salvation. Your salvation must lie in your own hands, through your own efforts."¹

"In conclusion, Dr. Ambedkar uttered a note of warning to the British Government as well as the Hindus. The British Government, he said, ought to remember that at the time of the transference of power, the Depressed Classes should be given adequate guarantees. If they did not, the Depressed Classes would fight the British with every means in their power. If the Hindus gave adequate guarantees to the Depressed Classes, they would fight their battles shoulder to shoulder with them. Otherwise there would be no compromise with them.

The Jubilee Committee organised for the purpose of celebrating Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's 50th birthday presented him this evening with a purse of Rs. 580 at a Mammoth Meeting of his followers, at Kamagar Maidan. Mr. M. V. Donde, Municipal Corporator presided."²

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¹: Bombay Sentinel (Bombay), dated 28th April 1942.

²: The Bombay Chronical, dated 27th April 1942.

THE DOORS OF MY HOUSE WOULD ALWAYS REMAIN OPEN TO FRIENDS

As per proclamation issued on July 2, 1942, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was included in the Executive Council of Viceroy of India.

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar immediately left for Delhi on July 5, 1942 to attend a meeting of the National Defence Council and returned to Bombay on July 11.

On his return, Dr. Ambedkar attended a dinner given by his friends and admirers at the Radio Club, Bombay. Speaking on the occasion, Acharya M. V. Donde referred to the years of patient labour through which they stood by him, and hoped that the leader would end the slavery of his people and succeed in ameliorating the conditions of the labouring masses of India.

In reply, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that,

He was born of the poor, was brought up among them, lived among them, had slept like them on the damp floor covered with sack-cloth, and shared the sorrow of his people. He promised to remain absolutely unchanged in his attitude to his friends and to the rest of the world, and added that the doors of his house in New Delhi would always remain open to his friends. ”¹

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¹: Keer, Pp. 347-349.

STRUGGLE OF LOWEST STRATA OF SOCIETY IS BOUND TO HELP ALL SECTIONS OF WORKING CLASS

“ On 12th July 1942, the Independent Labour Party and the Bombay Municipal Labour Union held a meeting to congratulate their leader, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

He told the labourers that although the main task before the Executive was the defence of the country, much of what he would accomplish would depend upon the colleagues in the Council.

At another meeting held at R. M. Bhatt High School, Bombay, by the peasants of Konkan Districts and States. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that, he would never surrender in the battle, he would have to wage for protecting and advancing the interests of the working classes in India ; but added that he would not at the same time threaten his colleagues in the Cabinet with his resignation at every point of minor difference.

Replying to a charge that a separate organisation for the Depressed Classes was prejudicial to the interests and solidarity of the Labour Classes in general, he observed that the struggle which comprised the lowest strata of society was bound to help in the amelioration of all other sections of the working class because when the bottom-most stone in a structure was shifted from its place, those above it were bound to be shaken out of their positions. He pointed out that the Caste Hindu labourers had not outgrown their prejudice against the Depressed Class labourers.

Anantrao Chitre, who presided over the function, urged Dr. Ambedkar to extend the field of his influence and activity of labour movement so as to include the non-Depressed Class labouring classes and assume the leadership of the entire toiling masses of India.”¹

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¹: Keer, P. 349.

IF THE BOTTOM-MOST STONE IS SHIFTED THOSE ABOVE ARE TO BE SHAKEN

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in the course of his reply to the congratulatory speeches made in a meeting of the peasants and Depressed Classes members from Ratnagiri and Kolaba Districts held last night* in the Bhatt High School, Bombay, said,

" I assure you that I shall not surrender in the battle, I will have to wage for protecting and advancing the interests of the working class in India in the Executive Council. You may depend on me as regards that, I also want to make it clear that I shall not be so childish as to keep my resignation ready in my pocket and flourish it in the face of my colleagues at every point of minor differences."

" I am anxious that the Depressed Classes movement should make a common front with the working classes of other communities," continued Dr. Ambedkar.

" With that object in view I clung to the Non-Brahmin Party for full ten years in the hope that sooner or later it would rise to the full height of its great mission of struggling for the freedom of the toiling masses of the great non-Brahmin community.

That party had in it the germs of the great principle of democracy. Its leaders unfortunately did not realise their duties and responsibilities and allowed the party to be smashed to bits under the double influence of Government and Congress patronage.

Even now I would welcome if they did something in the matter. I do not at all insist that the Non-Brahmin labouring masses should join our party. Let them have their own party if they so desire; but we can certainly make a common front against the exploiting classes in our common struggle against the Brahmins, the capitalists, landlords and other exploiting classes. By breaking up the party the Non-Brahmins have committed a political suicide.

1 : The Bombay Sentinel, dated 14th July 1942.

* As per B. S. A., dated 16th July 1942 and the Bombay Chronicle, dated 21st July 1942 the meeting was held on 15th July 1942. The date '14th' of the Bombay Sentinel in the source material might have been wrongly reprinted--- Editors.

As far as I am concerned I do not desire to follow such a suicidal policy. The Depressed Classes will continue to have their own political organisation.

Some people complain that the organisation of a separate party of the Depressed Classes harms the interests of working classes in general.

It does not do anything of the kind. On the contrary our struggle composed of the lowest strata of labour is bound to help in the amelioration of all other sections of the working class.

If the bottom-most stone in a structure is shifted from its place those above it are bound to be shaken out of their position. On the other hand a labour organisation only of Caste Hindus is not bound to be helpful to the Hindus.

On the contrary, if not rightly guided, it might even be harmful to the Depressed Classes. A Caste Hindu organisation may not recognise the rights of Depressed Classes labour. It may even trample on their rights as has happened in so many cases in the past.

One illustration will suffice to prove my contention. In 1929 there was a prolonged strike in the Bombay textile mills. During the strike I approached the strike leaders to do something to remove the Caste Hindu ban on Depressed Classes men working in certain departments of mills. The labour leaders took no action on my suggestion for months together except to pass a harmless resolution and to forward it to the Fawcett Committee which again did nothing in the matter.

On the other hand, the movement for the abolition of *Khoti* was launched by us. It was a movement launched in the interests of the Depressed Classes primarily but it was automatically helpful to Caste Hindu workers on *Khoti* lands. Such instances can be multiplied "*ad infinitum*."

All that I wish to emphasise is that our sectional movement is in no way harmful to other sections. Moreover, we are ever ready to make common cause with other sections of labour.

Mr. A. V. Chitre in his presidential remarks urged upon Dr. Ambedkar necessity for expanding the field of activity of the labour movement under his control so as to include the Non-Depressed Classes. He said that he "wanted to see Dr. Ambedkar not merely as the leader of the Depressed Classes but of the entire toiling masses of India".

Among the other speakers were Messrs Surendranath Tipnis, Narayan Nagu Patil, Devrao Naik, Wadvalkar and Gaikwad.



IF DEMOCRACY DIES IT WILL BE OUR DOOM

The President-elect of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference, Third Session, Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj, M. L. A. (Central) and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar arrived at Nagpur at 9 a.m. on 18th July 1942. They were received at the Railway Station by the chairman and the members of the Reception Committee. Almost all the members of the Reception Committee and the delegates were also present on the platform and accorded a hearty welcome to the President-elect and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar amidst deafening cries of "Ambedkar Zindabad" (long live Ambedkar). The President-elect and Dr. Ambedkar were profusely garlanded. A procession was then formed and the honoured guests were conducted to the lawn in front of the Railway Station where over fifty thousand people had gathered for the Darshan (Glimpse) of Dr. Ambedkar and the President-elect. Their appearance on the lawn was greeted with applause and deafening cheers of "Ambedkar ki jai" (victory to Ambedkar). Along the lawn a Guard-of-Honour was provided by five thousand uniformed Sainiks of the Provincial Samata Sainik Dal. The band of the Sainik Dal played appropriate tunes. After inspecting the guard-of-honour, the President-elect and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were taken in a procession to the Conference Pandal, preceded by a mile long squad of the Samata Sainik Dal, aided by their bands and followed by thousands of the visitors and delegates to the Conference. The procession is one that would be long remembered by the public of Nagpur as the like of it had not been seen before.

Triumphal Arches were erected *en route*, and were named as "Ambedkar Gate", "Hardas Gate", "Kalloo Ahirey Gate", "Ramabai Ambedkar Gate", etc. In front of the Mohan Park Hotel where the President-elect and Dr. Ambedkar alongwith other delegates were accommodated, the Sainiks formed themselves into lines on both sides of the road and formed an arch of lathis through which the Honoured Leader passed.

The three Conferences that were held in Nagpur from July the 18th to the July 20, 1942, namely-

- (1) The All-India Depressed Classes Conference, presided over by Rao Bahadur N. Shiva Raj B.A., B.L., M.L.A. (Central);
- (2) The Depressed Classes Women's Conference, presided over by Mrs. Dongre of Amraoti ; and
- (3) The Samata Sainik Dal Conference, presided over by Mr. Gopal Singh, M. B. E., M. L. A. (Punjab).

The All-India Depressed Classes Conference was remarkable for three things. It was remarkable because of the record attendance of men and women. There were not less than 75,000 people present at the session, and there were not less than 20,000 women. In addition to this, this was a Conference which was fully representative of the Depressed Classes of almost all the Provinces of India.

The second thing for which this Conference will remain memorable is the Resolutions that were passed at this Conference. These Resolutions contained for the first time a clear and positive enunciation of the political demands of the Depressed Classes. Nobody who reads them can have any doubt as to what the political demands of the Untouchables are. As some newspaper reporters have said, the Resolutions passed by this Conference constitute the Pakistan of the Depressed Classes, both in the nature of the demands that were made and also by the definiteness in which they were worded.

The third thing for which this Conference will remain memorable is the Resolution passed by the Conference to establish an All-India Organization to be called the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation. In this Organization which will act as the one single mouth-piece of the Depressed Classes of India, and the Conference has taken a definite decision that all other petty and provincial Organizations shall be merged in this one single Organization which will have its provincial branches in the different Provinces of India.

Viewed in the light of the work accomplished by this Conference, there can be no doubt that this Conference opens out a new vision for the Depressed Classes and gives a new direction to the movement of the Untouchables.

In this record of proceedings the Reception Committee also decided to include the proceedings of the two other Conferences that were held in the same pandal and as part of this main political Conference, and they too will excite interest and enthusiasm in the Untouchables all over India when they realise how the Volunteer Organization and the Women's Organization have been progressively making their influence felt to strengthen the life of the Untouchables both in social as well as in political matters.

ALL - INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONFERENCE HELD AT NAGPUR

on July 18 and 19, 1942

First day's proceedings

The Third Session of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference commenced at 3-30 p. m. on July 18, 1942 in a specially erected, spacious Pandal in the Mohan Park at Nagpur under the Presidentship of Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj, M. L. A. (Central). Delegates from all over India and over sixty thousand visitors, including distinguished visitors, and about twenty thousand lady visitors were present. The large number of lady visitors was spectacular feature of the Conference.

The President-elect and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were conducted by the Chairman of the Reception Committee to their seats. After the President-elect, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and other delegates took their seats, the proceedings commenced with the singing of welcome songs.

After the singing of welcome songs, Mr. G. T. Meshram, Chairman of the Reception Committee delivered his address.

H. L. Kosare after reading the report on behalf of the General Secretary said, "We have received messages of sympathy from all over India. It will take long time to read them all. I, therefore, only read the names of those from whom the messages have been received."

- Bengal : -
1. Mr. U. N. Edbor, M. A. B. L., M. L. A.
 2. Mr. A. Maji, M. L. A.
 3. Mr. B. B. Mandal, B. L., M. L. A.
 4. Hon'ble Mr. N. Barman, Minister.

- Madras : -
1. Rao Saheb V. J. Munniswami Pillay, M. L. A.
 2. Mr. E. Kannan, M. L. A.
 3. Mr. R. Veerian, Coimbatore
 4. Swami Sahajananda, M. L. A.
Chidamberam.

- Bombay : -
1. Mr. S. N. Mane, Barrister-at-Law, Belgaum.
 2. Poona Depressed Class College Students.
 3. Mr. Sawant, M. L. A. Satara District.
 4. Balbhim Sangh, Dhulia.
 5. Samatawadi Dalit Mandal, Dhulia.
 6. Mr. S. M. Dikhale, Poona.
 7. Mr. R. S. Salunke, Bhore State Dalit Praja.
 8. Mr. R. G. Khandale, Daund.
 9. Mr. T. S. Dhutre, Thana.
 10. Rajha-Bombay.
 11. The South Indian Adi Dravid Youth League.
 12. The Tirunelveli Dist. 5 B Adi Dravida Conference.

13. Mr. M. G. Parmer, B. A., D. P. A.,
F. R. C. S., Bijapur (N. G.)
14. Mr. Ramajibhai Bhanabhai, Ahmedabad.
15. Mr. Somabhai Sunderji, Ahmedabad.
16. Mr. Sadhu Premdas, Ahmedabad.
17. Mr. Atmaram Ichyaram Solanki, Ahmedabad.
18. Mr. S. P. Chavan, Meghwal Independent
League (Bombay)

- Punjab : -1. Mr. Bhagat Hansraj, M. L. A.
2. Mr. Sukhlal, Lahore.
3. Mr. R. L. Bhonodia, Lahore.

- U. P. :- 1. Mr. Ramchandra, Allahabad.
2. Rai Bahadur Homiprasad Tamta,
Almora
3. Mr. Radhelal Vyas, Bareilly.
4. Mr. Gangaram G. Dhanuk, Itawa.

Hyderabad:- 1. Mr. B. S. More, Aurangabad.

Mr. G. T. Meshram said, Mr. D. G. Jadhav, B.A., LL.B., M.L.A., Jalgaon, East Khandesh (Bombay) will now propose that our President-elect to take the chair.

Accordingly D. G. Jadhav, R. L. Biswas, B.A., B.L., M.L.A., (Bengal), Rai Sahib Shamlal, Ex-M.L.C. (Allahabad, U.P.); K. H. Shendre, B.A., L.L.B., Nagpur, (Central Provinces); Gopal Singh, M.B.E., M.L.A; Parliamentary Secretary to the Punjab government, Kurmiah, B.A., B.L., M.L.A., (Madras, Andhra); A. D. Roy, M.L.C., (Bengal) and P.N. Rajbhoj, Poona (Bombay) proposed, seconded and supported the resolution. Thereafter G. T. Meshram

said, "This resolution that Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj, President - elect of the Third Session of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference do take the chair has been duly moved, regularly seconded and supported from all corners of this Conference. I put it now to vote. Those, in favour will signify their assent by raising their hands. (All, All). Any against, will now signify their disapproval by raising their hands. There is no opposition. The resolution is unanimously carried. I now request Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj to take the Chair. Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj amidst cheers occupied the Presidential Chair and was garlanded by the Chairman of the Reception Committee."

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj then rose in the midst of cheers to address the Conference.

After his Presidential address was over Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj announced : The subjects Committee will meet in the hall of the Mohan Park Hotel at 9 p. m. All the delegates who have come here will form the Subjects Committee. In view of your great desire to hear Dr. Ambedkar today, I ask Dr. Ambedkar to address you before the Subjects Committee meets. The Chairman of the Reception Committee will explain this to you in Marathi.

Mr. G. T. Meshram : As desired by the President I have great pleasure to announce that our Great Leader Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has consented to speak today first in English and then in Marathi, inspite of his whole night journey and bad throat. You must know that wherever his train stopped last night, our people had collected in such large numbers to receive him therefore he could not get any sleep *en route*. You must keep pin-drop silence so that he may not have to overstrain his throat.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was given prolonged ovation as he rose to speak.

Address by Dr. Ambedkar

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said :

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this Conference the first and initial difficulty with which one is faced is the question of language. In this vast gathering vast number of people are from the Marathi speaking area to whom one must speak in the Marathi language if they are to understand the proceedings of this Conference. Besides the vast Marathi-speaking audience we have also present in this Conference representatives of the Scheduled Castes from other than Marathi-speaking Provinces. We have in our midst representatives of the Scheduled Castes from other Provinces as well. I see some from Bengal, from Bihar, from Madras, from Andhra, from Punjab and from various other places. It is quite obvious that if they are to follow our proceedings it is necessary to speak in English. To avoid this difficulty I have decided to speak twice-once in English and again in Marathi, so that both sections may know what I have to say. Today I propose to speak in English. Tomorrow I will address you in Marathi.

I might as well tell you how the idea of the holding of this Conference originated. As you will recall, I was called in April last to be present in Delhi to meet Sir Strafford Cripps, who had come to India as an agent of His Majesty's Government with proposals for constitutional changes and who was charged with the duty of negotiating with the different political parties in India for the acceptance of those proposals. Before I went to Delhi I had invited representatives of the Scheduled Castes in different Provinces in India to meet me in Delhi for consultation. When I communicated to them the results of my talks with Sir Strafford Cripps we all felt that the proposals Sir Strafford Cripps had brought with him were a death-blow to the interests of the Scheduled Castes. I expressed my views on the Cripps proposals in a statement to the press which I hope you have all read. But it was felt that common and united action on the part of the Scheduled Castes from all over India was a great necessity - and that it was only common action that could save us from the impending political doom. This Conference has been the result of the wish expressed by the Scheduled Castes all over India through their

representatives who met at Delhi and has therefore the backing of the Untouchable India as a whole. That is why we have here present among us representatives of the Scheduled Castes all over India. There was a great rivalry among the different Provinces as to where it should be held. Bengal, Punjab, U.P., C.P. and Bombay each wanted to have the credit of holding the Conference. Ultimately all agreed to allow the Central Provinces to have the credit to hold the Conference. There was however one condition on which they had insisted, namely that I should preside over the Conference no matter where it was held. In deference to the wishes of all I had agreed to preside. The Conference is taking place according to that plan. I am sure we never had a conference so vast and so successful, and I am sure we are all grateful to our C. P. friends. It is their enthusiasm, it is their efforts which had made the Conference the success which it is. The only deviation which has taken place from the original plan is the change in the Presidentship. In my place we have our friend Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj presiding over this Conference. At the time when I agreed to preside I was a free man with the freedom of a politician, and could have presided over the Conference and said what I thought I should say. The limitations of office were then non-existent. But before the Conference could take place, there came the announcement that I was appointed a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. This brought in the limitations of office and I thought it would be better to have another person who could speak for the Scheduled Castes with freedom and authority. Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj can speak with freedom, and I have no doubt that he can also speak with authority. He has long laboured in the cause of our people. He represents our people in the Central Legislature. By his education there are very few who are as well qualified as he is. He is B. A., B. L. of the Madras University. He has been a practising lawyer and he has been a professor of Law in Madras for over ten years. Indeed, a better person than him could not have been found to preside over this Conference, and I am indeed very happy that he has been chosen to take my place.

While I am a Member of Government of India, you will have the responsibility of keeping up our movement and making it effective so that it may lead to the result we all hope to achieve. I shall help you, I shall advise you. But I shall not be able to participate in it. That is a fact you must all bear in mind. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that before I transfer the responsibility to others, I must render account of my stewardship of this movement of the Untouchables which has been associated with me and has been carried on under my guidance if not under my aegis during the last 20 years. It is necessary for me to do so in order that those on whom this responsibility will fall should know where the Scheduled Castes stand *vis-a-vis* other communities in this country, what has been done and what remains to be done for their emancipation.

It is a matter of immense satisfaction that the Untouchables have made great strides along all sides. I will particularise only three. They have acquired a degree of political consciousness which few communities in India have acquired. Secondly, they have made considerable progress in education. Thirdly, they are securing a foothold in the institutions and in the public service of the country.

The modern generation of Untouchables are not in a position to realize the immensity of the progress made by the Untouchables. For the simple reason that they do not know how things stood when the movement began 20 years ago. I well remember the first meeting addressed in Bombay after I returned from England as a Barrister-at-Law. Except the organisers of the meeting, there was not a single member in the audience—some persons were sitting on the doorsteps of houses smoking pipes and others were chatting in corners by themselves. No one thought of attending the meeting. See the difference. You have here an audience of 75000 people. Education has made a good progress as compared to that 20 years ago. In Poona alone there are 50 boys studying in colleges. There are altogether about 500 Untouchables who have graduated from the various universities. Some are doctors. Some have become barristers. Many of our brethren are members of Municipalities, District and Local Boards. Years ago our children were denied

education. Years ago Untouchables were not permitted to be Members of Local Boards and Municipalities for fear of causing pollution. All this has now changed. Our progress in public service has not been as rapid as we wish. In some respects the Untouchables have an entry. I must mention the Police and the Army. The Police Department was closed to the Untouchables and not even a constable's place was open to the Untouchables. This has changed in some Provinces at least. Our people are now recruited in the Police Service. I must also mention the Army. Upto 1892, Mahars were everywhere in the Army and there were Armies of Mahars. After 1892 the entry of the Mahars in the Army was stopped. During the great War of 1914, recruitment of the Mahars in the Army was restarted and one battalion of the Mahars was formed. After the last War that battalion was again disbanded. Now, however, our regiments are again being formed. Commissions are being granted to our young men and 5 or 6 of our young men have received King's Commission and are holding posts of responsibility and honour in the Army. The greatest progress that we have made is to be found among our women folk. Here you see in this Conference these 20000 to 25000 women present. See their dress, observe their manners, mark their speech. Can any one say that they are Untouchable women. The progress made by our women is the most astonishing and encouraging feature of our movement and it is of course the most gratifying feature.

This is a record of progress of which we may all be legitimately proud. It is a progress for which we have not to thank anybody. It is not the result of Hindu charity. It is an achievement which is entirely the result of our own labour. The question is how can we maintain this progress. That is a question we must never forget to ask ourselves. Progress in the competition of communities is the result of power. This power may be economic, it may be social or it may be political. Have we power to sustain our progress ? Have we economic power ? I am sure we have none. We are a class of serfs. Have we social power ? I am sure we have none. We are a degraded portion of humanity. The only thing, therefore, we can depend upon for our continued progress is the capture of political

power. I have no doubt that is our only salvation, and that without it we will perish. It is on this question that we must concentrate all our attention. It is a question of life and death for us. What are our prospects in the matter of capturing political power ? It is better if I sum up the forces which are helping us and the forces which are working against us. With the knowledge of such forces, you will be better able to frame your policy and forge your sanctions.

Let me begin by telling you what has been the key-note of my politics. You may be familiar with it but it is well to re-state it. My basis of my politics lies in the proposition that the Untouchables are not a sub-head or a sub-section of the Hindus, and that they are a separate and a distinct element in the national life of India, as separate and distinct as the Muslims and like the Muslims of India the Untouchables are entitled to separate political rights as against the Hindus of India. This is the key-note of my politics. No one will misunderstand me or my politics if he bears that in mind. Having stated the fundamental basis of my politics I will proceed to sum up the forces working for and against our claim for separate political rights. To begin with the Round Table Conference, the Round Table Conference was a very vast affair, and I do not wish to trouble you with all the details of what took place there. I will confine myself to what happened to the Untouchables. There was a contest between me and Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi contested that the Untouchables were a sub-section of the Hindus and consequently if any political power was to devolve from the hands of the British it should pass undivided into the hands of the Hindus who could be trusted to look after the interests of the Untouchables. The position taken up by me was totally different; I contended that the Untouchables formed separate and distinct element in the life of the country. The Hindus who are their hereditary enemies could not be trusted and far from using the political power for raising the Untouchables the fear was that they would use it for perpetuating their subjection, and it was, therefore, absolutely necessary that there should be political partition between the Untouchables and the Hindus so that the Untouchables

may get political power in their own hands to use it to promote their welfare or to use it to save themselves against the tyranny and oppression of the Hindus. I do not want to dilate upon what the Mahatma or other Hindus did by way of manoeuvring to defeat the claim. It is sufficient to say that at the Round Table Conference the Untouchables won and the Mahatma lost. The Communal Award was the result of this contest. Its great virtue lies in the fact that the Untouchables were recognised in the national life of India and entitled to claim separate political rights. That is the importance of the Communal Award.

Mr. Gandhi, at first, did not accept the Communal Award. He started a fast unto death to compel the British Government to unsettle a settled fact. He failed in the fast as he failed at the Round Table Conference in defeating the claim of the Untouchables to be treated as a distinct element separate from the Hindus and entitled to separate political recognition. In the Poona Pact which was the result of his fast, he had to admit the main contention I had put forth at the Round Table Conference.

In the first round, the victory had gone to the Untouchables. Our position remained intact even after the war had commenced and the Congress had come to occupy a dominant position in Indian politics. Indeed, our claim was reassured and sustained by the declaration of the Viceroy made on the 8th August 1940 in which it was made clear that the Muslims and the Untouchables were distinct and separate elements in the National life of India and that the British Government will not enforce a constitution which has not the support of the Muslims and the Depressed Classes.

I have spoken so far of the strength of our position. I must now speak to you of the forces that tend to weaken our position. One malignant factor which has been working to weaken our position is Gandhi and Gandhism. By signing the Poona Pact, I helped to save the life of Mr. Gandhi. But Mr. Gandhi accepted the Poona Pact not as a gentleman signing an agreement with the intention to

honour his word but as a crafty person seeking to find a way out of a difficulty. For, I want you to remember that Mr. Gandhi, notwithstanding the Poona Pact which saved him from death, never gave his true and honest consent to the principle underlying the Poona Pact. He remained a determined opponent of the claim of the Untouchables for a separate political recognition and has ever since done everything possible to oppose our claim and to undermine our position. I want you to bear in mind that Mr. Gandhi is our greatest opponent. I do not like to use the word enemy, though there is enough justification for it. There are some among us who are deluded by the artificiality of his phraseology. But, I must warn you that you would be making the greatest mistake if you forget to take note of the fact that among the adverse forces which are weakening your side and against which you have to concentrate your forces in winning your battle for political freedom, the most formidable force is Mr. Gandhi.

The second factor which has weakened your position must be ascribed to the change in the attitude of His Majesty's Government. Upto the declaration of 8th August 1940, His Majesty's Government's view was that the Untouchables were distinct and a separate element and that they constituted so important an element that their consent was necessary for any constitutional changes that may be desired. But in the proposals of His Majesty's Government which were sent down with Strafford Cripps, His Majesty's Government took a complete *volte-face*. For, Sir Strafford Cripps proclaimed without blush or without remorse that only the consent of the Hindus and the Muslims was enough for giving effect to the constitutional changes involved in the Cripps proposals; that the consent of the Untouchables was not necessary. In plain terms the Untouchables had ceased to be regarded as an important element in the National life of India. It passes one's comprehension how 60 to 70 millions of Untouchables have ceased to be an important element within a few months. It is a complete somersault on the part of His Majesty's Government. It is a great betrayal of the Untouchables. Whatever the reasons for this betrayal and however strong may be your feelings at so unjust and

indecent an act on the part of His Majesty's Government, the fact must be recognized that this has been the greatest breach in our war. There is a third circumstance of an adverse character to which I think I must not fail to draw your attention. There was a time when there was a solidarity of feeling based on community of interest among the different minority communities in India, among whom the Muslim Community was a premier community. That solidarity is now gone. This is principally due to the change in the vision of the Muslim community brought about by the Muslim League. The Muslim League when it was resuscitated by Mr. Jinnah after the 1937 election began with the ideology that the Musalmans were a minority, and as a minority they needed the strength of other minorities to support and sustain them. So firm was the faith of the Muslim League in the scheme of mutual strength that the Muslim League had taken up the cause of other minorities and passed resolutions pledging its support to their claims and had stood out not merely as an advocate of the Muslim cause but as a champion of all the other minorities in India. This attitude of the League has undoubtedly been of great help to the Untouchables as the attitude of the Untouchables had always been to the Muslims of India. But the League's attitude has undergone a complete change. The Muslim League ever since the Resolution on Pakistan was passed has ceased to regard the Muslims as a community. It holds that the Muslims are a nation. That is not all. The Muslim League further believes that it has nothing to do with the other communities, that it has nothing to do with the Hindu community but it has also nothing to do with other minority communities. The Muslim League alignment is simple. It is an alignment of Muslim as against all other Non-Muslim without distinction or discrimination. This change in the attitude of the League cannot but have serious consequences for the Untouchables. It means that the Untouchables have lost an ally. But it may mean more than the loss of an ally. The Muslim League has not only come to set up a new and a different alignment of Muslims *versus* Non-Muslims, it has set up a new equation of values. That equation is a simple equation. It says that the Muslims, whatever their numbers, are just equal to the Non-Muslims and therefore, in any political arrangement the Muslims must get fifty per cent. To this equation no one can

consent. Not only it is against arithmetic; it is also against the interests of all non-Muslim including the Untouchables. Having regard to these changes in the political standpoint of the Muslim League the Untouchables may be said not only to have lost an ally but also to have lost a friend. For, if the League insists on fifty per cent representation in everything, there can be no doubt that the Muslims and the Untouchables will come in conflict.

I have, so far, given you an idea as to what was our position in Indian politics and what forces have been working to undermine that position. Let me now give you an idea of what I think should be your political demands. It is very necessary that you should formulate them in clear terms. It will clarify the position. Our people will know what we stand for. Our opponents will have notice of our demands.

In the first place, you must insist upon being recognised as an independent and separate element in the national life of India. The theory that they are only a sub-section of the Hindus must be fought tooth and nail. Failure to get the Untouchables recognized as a distinct element, separate from the Hindus, will keep them submerged and lead to their suppression and degradation. Next, you must ask for provision being made in the constitution for a sum of money to be set apart annually in the budget of every Province for the education of the Untouchables. You must demand such a sum not only for primary education but also for higher education. Higher education is more important to us at this stage than primary education. From the standpoint of leadership, from the standpoint of filling in high administrative posts, higher education is to the Untouchables a great necessity. Thirdly, you should demand that a number of posts in the public services shall be reserved for the Untouchables subject, of course, to the rule of minimum qualification. This is very essential. We suffer from bad administration and not from bad laws. The administration is bad because it is in the hands of the Caste Hindus, who carry their social prejudices into administration and persistently deny to the Untouchables for one reason or another the principle of equal benefit to which they are entitled. Good laws can do you no good unless you have good

administration and you can have good administration when you have persons belonging to the Untouchables holding high administrative posts from which they could watch how other Hindu Civil Servants are behaving towards the Untouchables and to check them, control them and prevent them from doing mischief. It is, however, not enough to ask for mere reservation. It is necessary to insist that such reservation shall be given effect to within a stated period. This is far more essential than mere reservation. For, unless you fix a period, the reservation will not come. It will be evaded on one ground or another and of course on the usual but unfathomable ground that no suitable candidate was available. We all know that to a Hindu, if he is the appointing authority, no candidate from the Untouchables would be a suitable candidate. Fourthly, you must insist upon securing representation for the Untouchables in the Central and Provincial Executives. These are key positions. It is those who occupy these positions who have the power to give direction to the course of events. They alone can control any mischief that they may be threatened of and they alone can force new and salutary changes in social, political, and economic affairs. The Untouchables must insist that their representatives are placed in these key positions. This time it must not be left to understanding or convention. The Hindus cannot be trusted to abide by their plighted word. You must see that a provision in this behalf is made part of the constitution.

Then, there is the last demand which the Untouchables must insist upon. It is the last, but it is by no means the least in importance. Indeed, I am convinced that it is the most vital demand which to my mind must override every other demand. I refer to the project of having new settlements of the Untouchables, separate and independent, of the Hindu villages. Why have the Untouchables been the slaves and serfs of the Hindus for so many thousand years ? To my mind the answer lies in the peculiar organization of Hindu villages. You have spread out all over India some 7,00,000 Hindu villages, Attached to every Hindu village there exists a small settlement of

Untouchables. This settlement of Untouchables is usually numerically very small as compared with the Hindu village to which it is attached. Secondly, this settlement of Untouchables is economically without any resource and without any opportunity for improvement. It is invariably a settlement of landless population. Being Untouchable it could not sell anything, for nobody would buy from an Untouchable. It is wholly a population, destitute, and dependent for its livelihood upon the Hindu village. It lives by begging food or by offering its labour for a paltry wage. In this setting you can well understand why the Untouchable has remained in a degraded condition for so many centuries. As against the Hindu village, the Untouchables simply cannot offer any resistance. They are numerically small and they are economically poor. While this village system continues to exist in its present form, the Untouchables will never achieve their independence, whether social, or economic, and will never get over the inferiority complex which they have developed as a result of their state of social and economic dependence. The village system must, therefore, be broken. It is the only way that is open for the Untouchables if they really wish to emancipate themselves from the stranglehold which the Hindus have acquired over them through the village system. My suggestion is that you should insist upon a provision being made in the Constitution for the formation of new and independent villages exclusively of Untouchables at the public cost to be undertaken by the Central Government. There is a good deal of cultivable land which belongs to Government and which is unoccupied. This could be reserved for the purpose of giving effect to this scheme of new villages of Untouchables. Government could buy from private individuals out-lying vacant land and use it for the same purpose. It would not be difficult to induce the Untouchables to shift from their present habitats to these new villages and settle there as independent farmers. The process may take time. But, that does not matter. It is so vital that we must insist upon the scheme being made by the constitution itself a matter of obligation upon the Central Government.

There is one other point about which I must speak to you a few words. That is about the necessity of forming one central

all-India political organisation to act as the mouth-piece of the Untouchables of India. We have been carrying on our political activities through our provincial organizations. I find that even in provinces there is a multiplicity of political organizations. Any ambitious person who wants to parade himself as a President or a Secretary founds an association with himself as President or the Secretary. He needs do nothing more than get a printed letter paper having the name of the association and his name as President or Secretary. This is a state of anarchy which you must put a stop to at once. There is only one way by which this can be done. And that is by establishing an all-India organization with provincial branches and to abolish all existing organizations. This will give you the strength you need and enable you to work in a manner that will help you to build a united front. I hope you will take up this matter in right earnest.

I have told you what I have thought and felt regarding the problem of the Untouchables and I hope you will give it your best consideration.

Perhaps, in closing I may refer to our attitude to the war. From the beginning we have supported the war efforts. I am sure we shall continue to lend it our support. We have our political demands which, we insist, shall be satisfied. But we have given our support to the war efforts without making the satisfaction of our demands being a condition precedent. It is not that we value the satisfaction of our demands as of lesser importance than the successful conclusion of the war. We do not lay down any conditions for our support to the war because we feel that the successful issue of the war will help us better in the realization of our political demands than the loss of the war. This is a war between democracy and dictatorship - not an enlightened dictatorship but a dictatorship of the most barbarous character based not on any moral ideal but on racial arrogance. If any dictatorship needs to be destroyed, it is this vile Nazi Dictatorship. Amidst all the political dissensions that one witnesses in this country, amidst all uncertainties of the future which some feel, we are

likely to forget what a menace to our future this Nazism, if it wins, is going to be. What is more important is that its racial basis is a positive danger to Indians. If this is a correct view of the situation, it seems to me that there lies on us a very heavy duty to see that democracy does not vanish from the earth as a governing principle of human relationship. If we believe in it, then, we must both be true and loyal to it. We must not only be staunch in our faith in democracy but we must resolve to see that in whatever we do, we do not help the enemies of democracy to uproot the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. On that point I hope we are all agreed and if you agree with me, then it follows that we must strive along with other democratic countries to maintain the basis of democratic civilization. If democracy lives, we are sure to reap the fruits of it. If democracy dies, it will be our doom. On that there can be no doubt.

There is nothing more that I have to say to you on this occasion. I am happy to be in the midst of you. I shall be happy to serve you in future as I have done in the past. If we all work together and strive together, we will not fail, for our cause is the cause of justice, and the cause of humanity.

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj, President, declared the session adjourned till 10 A. M. tomorrow and that as already announced the Subject Committee will meet at 9 p.m. to-night in the hall of the Mohan Park Hotel.

Subjects Committee's Sitzings

July 18, 1942

The Subjects Committee of the Third All-India Depressed Classes Conference, consisting of all the delegates, met at 9 p.m. in the hall of the Mohan Park Hotel, with the President, Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj in the Chair and discussed the draft resolutions. After a session lasting for four hours, the Subjects Committee unanimously agreed upon the resolutions to be placed before the open session of the Conference.

Open Session**Second Day***July 19, 1942*

The Third Session of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference re-assembled at 10 a.m. with Rao Bhadur N. Shivraj in the Chair.

The proceedings commenced with the singing of songs specially composed and sung by several members of the Conference.

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj said,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to announce that the Subjects Committee has agreed to place in this Conference five resolutions. Resolutions I to IV will be moved first as one proposition and Resolution V will be moved next. I now call upon Mr. B. K. Gaikwad, M.L.A. Nasik (Bombay) to move the first four resolutions.

While moving Resolutions Mr. B. K. Gaikwad said, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the resolutions I am asked to move which read as follows :

Resolution No I : Cripps Proposals Unacceptable

This Conference declares that the proposals of His Majesty's Government relating to constitutional changes sent out with Sir Stafford Cripps are utterly unacceptable to the Scheduled Castes. In the opinion of this Conference these proposals were nothing but a betrayal of the interests of the Scheduled Castes and a breach of the assurance given by His Excellency the Viceroy in his declaration of 8th August 1940 on behalf of His Majesty's Government that a constitution which had not the consent of the Scheduled Castes would not be imposed upon them.

Protest Against Cripps Proposals

This Conference places on record its most emphatic protest against His Majesty's Government agreeing to the demand made by the Congress that the new Constitution be framed by a Constituent Assembly and also against the proposal of safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Castes by a

treaty between the new Indian National Government and the Government of His Majesty in Great Britain.

Resolution No. II : Constitution Demanded

This Conference declares that no constitution will be acceptable to the Scheduled Castes unless,

- (1) it has the consent of the Scheduled Castes,
- (2) it recognizes the fact that the Scheduled Castes are a distinct, separate and important element in the national life of India, and
- (3) contains within itself provisions which will give to the Scheduled Castes a real sense of security under the new constitution and which are set out in the following resolutions.

Resolution No. III : Provisions in New Constitution

For creating this sense of security in the Scheduled Castes, this Conference demands that the following provisions shall be made in the new constitution.

Provisions in Provincial Budgets for Scheduled Castes Advance

- (1) That, in the budget of every Provincial Government an annual sum, as may be determined upon by agreement be set apart for promoting primary education among the children of the Scheduled Castes and another annual sum for promoting advanced education among them and such sums shall be declared to be the first charge on the revenues of the Province.

Representation in Executive Government

- (2) That, provision shall be made by law securing representation to the Scheduled Castes in all executive Governments, Central and Provincial, the proportion of which shall be determined in accordance with their number, their needs and their importance.

Representation in Public Services

- (3) That, provision shall be made by law for securing representation to the Scheduled Castes in the Public Services, the proportion of which shall be fixed in accordance with their

numbers, their needs and their importance. This Conference insists that in the case of security services such as Judiciary, Police and Revenue, provision shall be made that the proportion fixed for the Scheduled Castes shall, subject to the rule of minimum qualification, be realized within a period of ten years.

Representation by Statute in all Legislatures and Local Bodies

(4) That, provision shall be made by law for guaranteeing to the Scheduled Castes representation in all legislatures and local bodies in accordance with their number, needs and importance.

Separate Electorate

(5) That, provision shall be made by law whereby the representation of the Scheduled Castes in all legislatures and local bodies be made by the method of Separate Electorates.

Representation on Public Service Commissions

(6) That, provision shall be made by law for the representation of the Scheduled Castes on all Public Service Commissions, Central and Provincial.

Resolution No. IV : Change in Village System

That, so long as the Scheduled Castes continue to live on the outskirts of the village, with no source of livelihood and in small numbers as compared to the Hindus, they will continue to remain Untouchables and subject to the tyranny and oppression of the Hindus and will not be able to enjoy free and full life. For the protection of the Scheduled Castes from the tyranny and oppression of the caste Hindus, to enable them to develop to their fullest manhood, to give them economic, and social security as also to pave the way for the removal of Untouchability, this Conference has after long and mature deliberation come to the conclusion that a radical change must be made in the village system now prevalent in India and which is the parent of all ills from which the Scheduled Castes are suffering for so many centuries at the hands of the Hindus. Realising the necessity of

these changes this Conference holds that alongwith the Constitutional changes in the system of Government there must be a change in the village system now prevalent made along the following lines :

Separate Villages

(1) The Constitution should provide for the transfer of the Scheduled Castes from their present habitation and constitute separate Scheduled Castes villages, away from and independent of the Hindu villages.

Settlement Commissions

(2) For the Settlement of the Scheduled Castes in new villages, a provision shall be made in the Constitution for the establishment of a Settlement Commission.

Land for Scheduled Castes

(3) All Government land which is cultivable and which is not occupied shall be handed over to the Commission to be held in trust for the purpose of making new settlements of the Scheduled Castes.

Acquisition of New Land

(4) The Commission shall be empowered to purchase new land under the Land Acquisition Act from private owners to complete the scheme of settlement of the Scheduled Castes.

Central Government to provide Minimum of Five Crores Per Annum

(5) The Constitution shall provide that the Central Government shall grant to the Settlement Commission minimum sum of Rupees five crores per annum to enable the Commission to carry out their duty in this behalf."

Mr. President, these resolutions are really the sheet-anchor of our movement. They have been so clearly worded that it needs no long speech from me to commend them to you. The first Resolution condemns the action of the Government in announcing the Cripps Proposals which are detrimental to the

interests of the Scheduled Castes. Resolutions II, III & IV lay down the provisions absolutely necessary in the future Constitution for the political, economic and social welfare of the Scheduled Castes. We have no faith in the high sounding promises of the caste Hindus. How can one trust persons, who went against the Poona Pact before its ink was dry ? It will be the blackest day in the history of the world, if the destinies of the millions of the Depressed Classes of India were to be entrusted to such communities as are thirsting to stop the progress so far made by the Scheduled Castes. These resolutions are our *Magna Charta* and each member of the Depressed Classes must be prepared even to make the extreme sacrifice to achieve the objects laid down in it. Even now our people in the villages are treated no better than slaves, but when our destinies will be handed over into the hands of the caste Hindus, we can picture and imagine what our fate will be. It is, therefore, the duty of every individual of our community to support these resolutions. With these few words, I strongly commend these resolutions for your acceptance.

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj asked Mr. Rai Saheb Shamlal of Allahabad to second the Resolution.

Rai Saheb Shamlal said,

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to second the resolution moved by my friend, Mr. B. K. Gaikwad of Nasik. I have been a social worker of the Depressed Classes for nearly three decades. It has been our greatest drawback in not having a chartered programme of our ultimate aims and objects. This drawback will now be removed by the Resolution just moved. When the Cripps Proposals were disclosed at Delhi, Dr. Ambedkar lost no time in inviting to Delhi leaders of the Scheduled Castes from all over India. After we met there, we unanimously decided on the rejection of the proposals which were entirely one sided and were calculated to cause immense harm to all the Depressed Classes. It is unnecessary for me to inflict a long speech in telling you what are our drawbacks and what disabilities we are suffering from. Each one of us suffers these daily and mentioning them here will be considered redundant. The

resolution is for the good of the present generation and the generations to come and deserves unanimous acceptance. I can assure the Conference on behalf of the Province from which I am coming of our hearty support in carrying out the mandate. With these few words I second the Resolution and commend it for your acceptance.

The resolution was supported by the following delegates :

- (1) Mr. Gopal Singh, M. B. E., M. L. A. (Punjab).
- (2) Mr. N. N. Das, M. A., B. L. (Calcutta).
- (3) Mr. R. R. Bhole, B. A., L L. B., M. L. A.,
(Poona, Bombay),
- (4) Mr. A. D. Roy, B. A., M. L. C. (Jessore, Bengal).
- (5) Mr. P. M. Patani, (Ahmedabad, Gujarat)
- (6) Mr. Mangilal, (Rajputana).
- (7) Mr. H. L. Kosare, B. A., (Nagpur)
- (8) Mr. B. H. Varale, M.L.A. (Karnatak, Bombay).

The resolutions, having been proposed, duly seconded and supported, the President put them to vote. As there was none to disapprove these resolutions, he declared the resolutions unanimously carried.

President, Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj then called upon Mr. D. G. Jadhav, B. A., L. L. B., M. L. A., Jalgaon (Bombay) to move the second part of the resolution viz. Section V of the resolution.

Resolution-Mr. D. G. Jadhav

Mr. D. G. Jadhav, moving the resolution said,

" Mr. President, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

the Resolution that I have the honour to move for your acceptance reads as follows :

Resolution V : Establishment of All - India Scheduled Castes Federation

This Conference is of opinion that the time has arrived for the establishment of a Central Political Organization for carrying on the political movement of the Scheduled Castes. This Conference, therefore, resolves to establish the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation as the Central Political Organization of the Scheduled Castes of India and appeals to all local political organizations of the Scheduled Castes to merge into this Central Organization and to work through it. For the execution of this purpose, this Conference authorises the President to form a Committee with himself as the Chairman to frame a constitution for the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation. The Committee will submit the report to a provisional council consisting of the following on whose approval the constitution shall become operative :

Bengal	:	Mr.	R. L. Biswas
		,,	A. D. Roy
		,,	R. S. Dhusia
		,,	B. C. Mandal
Bombay	:	Mr.	D. G. Jadhav
		,,	P. N. Rajbhoj
		,,	B. K. Gaikwad
Punjab	:	Mr.	Gopal Singh
		,,	Seth Kisandas
C. P. & Berar	:	Mr.	R. V. Kawade
		,,	K. H. Shendre
		,,	H. L. Kosare

United Provinces : Rai Saheb Shamlal

Rai Saheb Ramsahai

Dr. Nandlal Jaiswal

Mr. Badriprasad Balmiki

Babu Tilakchand

Ladies and gentlemen, the resolution which I commend for your acceptance will, I am sure, appeal to all and may be safely expected to have your unanimous support. None needs being told that union is strength. These are the days of collective pressure and unless we put forth our whole strength under one organization we cannot expect to survive the onslaughts from other greater communities. We all know that the caste Hindus are very strongly organised under the Congress, and the Muslims under their League. Knowing these facts, if we do not combine under one Federation, our opponents will take advantage of the disunity amongst us and play one faction against another. Thus, while we shall be fully occupied with petty quarrels amongst ourselves, the world will be told that there is no such thing as separate entity of the Depressed Classes. We would have no opportunity left for giving fight to our opponents and thus the disunity amongst ourselves will be the cause of our downfall. One can very well imagine the worst dissabilities awaiting for us, should we be surrendered to the good will of the caste Hindus ?

This resolution demands that all provincial organizations should merge into and work under one Central Organization. In times of war political parties in the belligerent nations forget their existence and work together to face the common enemy. We must take lesson in time for our fight is no less than a war of our existence. I am sure every one of us would prefer to die than live like a slave. Why not, then, follow the old adage that ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Unite now before it is too late and prevent the ills that stare you in the face. After the ills take charge of you it will be too late to cure. It is possible that some amongst us may fear the loss of

self-importance by placing themselves under one leadership but I put it to you whether the loss of importance of few persons is greater than the loss to be sustained by the millions. I appeal to you not only to accept the resolution unanimously but to lose no time in bringing together all the different local organization under one central banner. I do not mean to say that there exists any important organizations which are not with us. All that I mean to convey is that even the few, unimportant though they may be, should not remain aloof from our organization. With these few words, I commend this resolution for your acceptance.

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj then called upon Rai Sahib N. C. Dhusya from Bengal to second the resolution.

Accordingly Rai Saheb N. C. Dhusya Seconded the resolution.

The resolution was supported by :

- (1) Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj, Poona (Bombay)
- (2) „ Mangilal, (Rajputana)
- (3) „ B. C. Mandal, B.A., (Calcutta)
- (4) „ Badriprasad Valmiki, Allahabad (U.P.)
- (5) „ P. L. K. Talib, M.A., LL.B., (Lucknow, U.P.)
- (6) „ P. J. Roham, M.L.A., Ahmednagar (Bombay).

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj said, " As Resolution No. V has been proposed, duly seconded and supported, I now put it to vote. All those who are in favour of the resolution will signify their assent by raising their hands (all seem to have raised their hands). All those who are against the resolution will signify their disapproval by raising their hands. I find no one is against the resolution. I declare that the resolution is carried unanimously."

Concluding Address by Dr. Ambedkar

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj then requested Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to speak as promised by him.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who spoke this time in Marathi, said :

Friends, during the last ten years the political movement has taken great strides. Still I am sure the resolutions which you have passed today mark the beginning of a new era so far as the Untouchables are concerned. As you know, I am taking up from tomorrow the duties of my new office. I, therefore, consider it to be my duty to render to you an account of my stewardship during the past twenty years, (Dr. Ambedkar here repeated in Marathi the account of the political, economic and social progress made by the Depressed Classes during the past twenty years.)

I must tell you that between the condition of the Muslims and the Untouchables there is a substantial difference, although both are known as minority communities. The Muslim Community is very rich as compared to our Community. They were rulers in this Country till the British came. They have, thus, superior status behind them and their progress is decidedly far in advance of us. We had been oppressed for centuries. Our economic condition is one of extreme poverty. We cannot simply compare ourselves with the Muslims on the ground of population alone. We have to work up ourselves from the beginning relying entirely on our own efforts. We have to raise our Community. Due to my new appointment the responsibility for shouldering the task now rests upon others. I have no love for office. I am quite alright as I was. I do not consider that there is any difference between " the Hon'ble Dr. Ambedkar " and the simple " Dr. Ambedkar ". What I consider most important with regard to my appointment is that a convention is now established that there should be a seat for the representative of the Depressed Classes on the Executive Council of the Governor General. This is death-blow to Brahminism. Therein lies the importance of my appointment. It was not in the interest of Brahminism to have such a convention at all. I consider this a great victory for the Untouchables.

There are many people who are not well disposed towards me. I am by nature given to live alone and spend my time in reading. Many people consider this nature of mine as an indication that I do not treat the people properly and avoid them. I assure you that I do not mean any insult to any one. My time is limited. I have to do many things and I have no assistance.

Many Hindus look upon me as their enemy. They complain that I speak hard to injure their feelings. I know I have kind heart and I have many friends even among Brahmins. But even a kind hearted man has to speak the truth. When he sees his kith and kin being treated worst than dogs and their future progress blocked by all means, how can they expect me to treat them kindly as though they have done nothing. I try to suppress my feelings and treat my opponents with honour but guilty conscience feels the pinch, although my treatment to my opponents is never unkind.

I am definitely of opinion that in this Country political rights must be shared between the Hindus, the Musalmans and the Depressed Classes. The Depressed Classes must by law have a proper share in the Government of the Country along with the Hindus and the Musalmans. The future constitution can only work if it rests on these three pillars. To achieve this, you must all come together under one flag and have only organization. If we have not so far achieved the position in the Constitution which is due to us, it is because we have not been united. If you all unite and work under one organization, I have no doubt that you will reach the position you are entitled to.

Congress is a big organization and its influence is spread far and wide. Some naturally ask why this is so, and why our organization is not so spread. There are two things at the command of the Congress. The Congress have the whole Press of India behind it. It gets full publicity. We can get no publicity from the nationalist Hindu Press. Secondly, the Congress has money at its command. You will remember that the Congress collected a fund of one crore of rupees. This large fund forms the secret of its success. But for the work of our Community I have never asked for funds. What progress and organization we have achieved we have done so without the help

of any funds at all. I must, however, tell you that it is very necessary to collect funds to build up our organization and without funds our Community will not be able to march forward and to keep pace with the other already well-organized communities.

In public life mistakes do occur, but these should not discourage us. Through errors only we can find out our weaknesses and put them right.

I am very happy to note your decision today to have one organization for the whole of India. You must now in each Province establish its branches and you must see that all the existing organizations are merged in this one All-India Federation.

It is my great desire that there should be buildings of our organization not only in each Province but in each town to serve as a centre of office and activity. Last night, I was talking to Mr. Dashrath Patil of Bela (Nagpur). I told him to purchase a piece of land and erect a building in Nagpur for our organization. You can do that with a sum of rupees twenty to twenty-five thousand. If you will do this and invite me to lay the foundation stone of such a building at Nagpur, it shall give me the greatest pleasure to accept your invitation. (At this stage Mr. Sitaram Hadke presented a purse of rupees two hundred and fifty on behalf of Bhankheda Basti, Nagpur.) Dr. Ambedkar accepted the purse and made it over to Mr. Dashrath Patil to apply it for the building fund.

Mr. R. V. Kawade, General Secretary, expressed the thanks. Thereafter, the President declared the Session as dissolved.¹

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¹: Report of Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur Sessions-July 1942.

**EDUCATE, AGITATE, ORGANIZE,
HAVE FAITH AND LOSE NO HOPE**

The All India Depressed Classes Conference was held at Nagpur from 18th to 20th July 1942. On this occasion the Chairman and Members of the Reception Committee presented the Address to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on 20th July 1942. The draft of the Address and reply to the Address by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are as follows : Editors.

Address Presented to

The Hon'ble Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., J.P., Barrister-at-law,

Member of The Executive Council of H.E. the Viceroy

Our Most Beloved Babasaheb,

We, the Chairman and Members of the Reception Committee of the third All India Depressed Classes Conference held at Nagpur, beg respectfully to present you this address on the occasion of your having completed 50eth year of age, in token of our grateful appreciation of your long, sustained and untiring zeal and work in the cause of the downtrodden dumb millions of India.

This year is, by co-incidence, a most important one in the history of the Depressed Classes of India inasmuch as you have completed 50eth year of your age and you have now changed your sphere of work from active politics to the executive. If your life-history is anything, it is nothing but the history of the progress of the oppressed millions and sacrifice of one individual. You are not only an individual to us but an institution. You are our sole guide, friend and philosopher; nay, you are the only prop of the Depressed Classes. Your continuous and sustained efforts in the just and righteous cause for the uplift of our classes are really the means of such benefits as we have so far achieved.

A budding lawyer as you were, with a vast future, you risked your all by throwing yourself whole-heartedly in the struggle for relieving the distressed from the oppressed. In doing so, you did not halt to realise that you were antagonising your future clients, viz. the touchable classes, for a fight in the interests of the Depressed Classes is a fight against the so-called caste Hindus. Little did any one then realise that your efforts, in a short space of two decades, would result in the recognition of the rights of the Depressed Classes as a living entity necessitating a seat on the highest Executive of the country.

The procession from the Railway Station Nagpur to the Conference Pandal and the grand attendance at the Conference Session are testimony of the extent to which you are held in esteem by the people of our Communities. This spontaneous expression is but a little expression of the devotion of our classes to you for what you have done. You are more than a creator to us. We were thrown by the creator in a bottom-less abyss, but unlike him you have done everything to lift us up out of it.

We can find in history no equal to you in respect of your head and heart, who, for no other reason than service to our classes, has been as liberal as you, in keeping open the purse freely and devoting all life and energy for our cause. Words fail us to open our hearts and give expression to our feelings. Suffice it to say that if there be any living God on earth, he is personified in you.

We again offer you our sincere and heartfelt gratitude and wish you a long life so that your mission on this earth may be fulfilled.

Nagpur,

The 20th July, 1942.

We Beg to Remain,

Your most grateful and devoted followers,
Chairman and Members of the Reception Committee
of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference

In replying to the address, Dr. Ambedkar said :----

“ Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for the Address you have presented to me.

I wonder if such an address was at all necessary. Toasts and addresses have a peculiar history behind them, at any rate, toast has. The ceremony of drinking to the health of the King as we see it in the English Society came in after the civil war and during the period of restoration. It was originally a matter of compulsion and was forced on those English Regiments which had rebelled against the King. It was to enforce loyalty to the new King that they were forced to drink for the health of the King. Drinking for the health of the King is now universal and nobody cares to inquire about its origin. Its origin, as I told you, lay in the desire to compel doubtful loyalty to proclaim itself. Your loyalty, I know, is not doubtful and I should have thought it was unnecessary to vouchsafe it by means of this Address. Now that you have insisted on my accepting it, I welcome it as a token of the sentiments of love and affection which you bear towards me. It is a token of your appreciation of what I have done for the Untouchables. This Address proves that you uphold the stand I have taken in Indian politics in the name of the Untouchables of India. Our ideal is to be recognized as honourable partners with the Hindus and the Muslims in running the Government of this country--partners on honourable and equal terms. I can assure you that I will strive to achieve the ideal we have fixed before us.

You have less need of an assurance from me that I will fight for the ideal. I stand in greater need of an assurance from you. You have assured me of your love and affection. It was quite unnecessary. I want an assurance of another kind. It is an assurance of strength, unity and determination to stand for our rights, fight for our rights and never to return until we win our rights. You promise to do your part. I promise to do mine. With justice on our side, I don't see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter full of joy. The battle is

in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or sordid in it. For ours is a battle, not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality which has been suppressed and mutilated by the Hindu Social System and will continue to be suppressed and mutilated if in the political struggle the Hindus win and we lose. My final words of advice to you is educate, agitate and organize, have faith in yourselves and never lose hope. I shall always be with you as I know you will be with me."¹

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¹: Report of Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur Session - July 1942.

PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY IS MEASURED BY PROGRESS OF WOMEN

The All - India Depressed Classes

Women's Conference

SECOND SESSION

Held at Nagpur

on July 20, 1942.

Proceedings

The Second Session of the All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference commenced at 10 a. m. on July 20, 1942 in the specially erected Pandal in the Mohan Park, Nagpur, in the presence of over 75,000 audience. Women delegates and visitors numbered about 25,000. On the dias, distinguished leaders including the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were seated.

After the singing of the Welcome songs, Mrs. Kirtibai Patil, Chairperson of the Reception Committee delivered her address.

Thereafter Mrs. Indirabai Patil, General Secretary, read her report.

Mrs. Jaibai Choudhary proposed the name of Mrs. Sulochanabai Dongre as President of this Second Session of the All-India Depressed Classess Women's Conference.

Mrs. Radhabai Kamble seconded the proposal and accordingly Mrs. Sulochanabai Dongre occupied the Chair and delivered her address.

She said,

“ Sister delegates, at your desire our leader Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has agreed to address you in this Conference today. Another Conference of the *Samata Sainik Dal* is also to be held today in this very pandal. I, therefore, propose that the resolutions as framed by the Subjects Committee be moved in this open Session of the Conference without long speeches to enable out proceedings being completed in a short space of time.

I now move from the Chair the first resolution which runs as below:--

Resolution No. 1

Support to All-India Depressed Classes Conference :

1. That this Conference heartily supports all the resolutions passed at the 3rd "All India Depressed Classes Conference" held at Nagpur on 19th July, 1942.

I now put the resolution to vote. As there is no opposition, I declare the resolution carried unanimously.

The President then called upon Miss Prabhawatibai Ramteke to move the resolutions Nos. 2 and 3.

Miss Prabhawatibai Ramteke said, " President, delegates, and friends,

I will read the resolutions which stand in my name :

Resolution No. 2

Divorce Law :

That this Conference resolves that the women's right to divorce her husband be recognised by law, and to facilitate this, this Conference requests the Government and the leaders of the Society to undertake necessary changes in law.

Resolution No. 3

Polygamy :

That this Conference abhors the idea of polygamy existing in our society as being unjust to the women and therefore requests the Government to make necessary amends or changes in law to check or modify this custom.

These resolutions represent the demands for a long time. We are repeating them from every platform. They require no speech from me. I commend them for your unanimous acceptance."

The President Mrs. Dongre called upon Miss Bhimabai Badge to second the resolutions. Accordingly she seconded the resolutions. As there was no apposition the President declared these carried unanimously.

The President called upon to move Resolution No. 4 which was

moved by Mrs. Radhabai Kamble.

Mrs. Radhabai Kamble said, " President and sister delegates,
I move the following resolution for your unanimous acceptance.

Resolution No. 4

Economic condition :

That this Conference resolves that for the betterment of the economic condition, the right of the female workers in Mills, Bidi factories, Municipalities and Railways be recognised as under :--

(a) That they are entitled to a casual leave of 21 days and a leave at least for a month in a year just as it is in case of other employees.

(b) That in cases of death, accident or injury to these workers while on duty or work, an adequate compensation be given to them or their children.

(c) That a pension of at least of Rs. 15 be given to them on the completion of their work for 20 years, and the Conference requests the Government and the Labour Member in the Exexutive Council of His Excellency the Viceroy, to make necessary provision, by law, to meet these grievances."

Mrs. Jaibai Choudhury seconded the resolution.

Mrs. Jaibai Choudhury said,

President and sister delegates,

I second this resolution heartily. Almost all of us are labourers and it is very necessary that the law should be amended to make the provisions as mentioned in this resolution. In the absence of these provisions many labour families are suffering hardships. I commend the resolution for your unanimous acceptance.

The President declared the resolution carried unanimously.

The President then called upon Miss Manjula Kanfade to move resolution No. 5.

Miss Manjula Kanfade moved resolution No. 5 for unanimous acceptance.

Resolution No. 5.**Education :**

(a) That the Conference is of opinion that the percentage of education of females amongst the Depressed Classes is very low and that to further the cause of spreading education in them this Conference requests the Government that in each Province the Provincial Government should run at its own expense hostels of at least 50 Depressed Classes girl-students in every Province.

(b) That this Conference further requests and appeals to the Government that in view of the dire poverty of the Depressed Classes which makes it impossible for them to take secondary and higher education in schools and colleges, each Provincial Government should give freeships and scholarships to such students of the Depressed Classes as are desirous of taking secondary and college education.

(c) That taking into consideration the general illiteracy amongst the females of the Depressed Classes this Conference requests all the Provincial Government in the country to immediately take steps and enforce compulsory primary education by law amongst them.

This resolution needs no speech and I commend it to you for your unanimous acceptance.

Miss Latika Gajbhiye seconded the resolution.

The resolution was further supported by the following :

- (i) Miss Sulochana Naik (Amraoti)
- (ii) " Virendrabai Tirthankar (Nagpur)
- (iii) " Chandrabhaga Patil (Gondia)
- (iv) " Kausalya Nandeshwar (Nagpur)

The President declared the resolution carried unanimously.

Mrs. Radhabai Kamble moved resolution No. 6.

Resolution No. 6.**Law for appointing Lady Supervisors in Mills :**

That in many of the Mills it is observed that male Supervisors are appointed to supervise the work of the female workers. This in a number of places gives rise to most undesirable consequences. This Conference, therefore, requests the Central Government to make necessary provision in law to appoint Lady Supervisors in their stead.

Mrs. Indirabai Patil seconded the resolution.

The resolution carried unanimously.

The President Mrs. Dongre moved resolution No. 7 and 8 from the Chair.

Resolution No. 7.**Representation of Depressed Class females in Legislatures :**

That like the female representatives taken in the Central and Provincial Legislatures from female constituencies, this Conference feels that for the general progress and advancement of the women of the Depressed Classes seats be reserved for them on all legislative and other representative bodies.

I now put the resolution to vote. Those in favour will signify their assent by raising their hands. (All seem to have raised their hands). Those against will now signify their disapproval by raising their hands. I see no opposition. I declare resolution carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 8.**All-India Depressed Classes Women's Federation :**

That this Conference resolves that an All-India Scheduled Castes Women's Federation be established and to carry on its work a fund be raised.

I put the resolution to vote. Those in favour will signify their assent by raising their hands. (All seem to have raised their hands). Those against will now raise their hands to signify their disapproval. I see no opposition. I declare the resolution carried unanimously.

The President Mrs. Dongre then requested the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to address the Conference.

Address by Dr. Ambedkar

Addressing the Women's Conference, Dr. Ambedkar said :

I am very happy to have this occasion of addressing you. There cannot be an occasion of greater happiness to any one interested in the advancement of the Depressed Classes than to witness this gathering of women. That you would assemble in such vast number—almost 20,000 to 25,000 strong—would have been unthinkable 10 years ago. I am a great believer in Women's organization. I know what they can do to improve the condition of society if they are convinced. In the eradication of social evils they have rendered great services. I will testify to that from my own experience. Ever since I began to work among the Depressed Classes, I made it a point to carry women along with men. That is why you will see that our Conferences are always mixed Conferences. I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved, and when I see this assembly, I feel both convinced and happy that we have progressed. I shall tell you a few things which I think you should bear in mind.

Learn to be clean; keep free from all vices. Give education to your children. Instil ambition in them. Inculcate on their minds that they are destined to be great. Remove from them all inferiority complex. Don't be in a hurry to marry : marriage is a liability. You should not impose it upon your children unless financially they are able to meet the liabilities arising from

marriage. Those who will marry will bear in mind that to have too many children is a crime. That Parental duty lies in giving each child a better start than its parents had. Above all, let each girl who marries stand up to her husband, claim to be her husband's friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. I am sure if you follow this advice you will bring honour and glory to yourselves and to Depressed Classes.

Mrs. Kirtibai Patil, Chairperson of Reception Committee, expressed the thanks. Thereafter the President declared the Session as dissolved.¹



¹ : Report of Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur Session - July 1942

I MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AHIMSA AND MEEKNESS

Samata Sainik Dal Conference

**(Conference of the Depressed Classes
Volunteer Core)**

FIRST SESSION - 1942

Held At Nagpur

on July 20, 1942

The Samata Sainik Dal Conference commenced its session at 12-30 p. m. on July 20, 1942, in the specially erected pandal in the Mohan Park, Nagpur, in the presence of over 70,000 audience. On the dias, distinguished leaders including the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were seated.

The President-elect was conducted to his seat by the Chairman of the Reception Committee. After the President-elect and other delegates took their seats, the proceedings commenced with the singing of welcome songs.

Mr. A. L. Kosare, B.A., Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered his address.

Thereafter, Mr. R. R. Patil, General Secretary, read his report.

Mr. A. L. Kosare called upon Mr. M. M. Sasalekar, General Secretary, *Samata Sainik Dal*, Bombay to move that the President elect, Mr. Gopal Singh, M L. A. (Punjab) do occupy the Chair.

Accordingly Mr. M. M. Sasalekar moved the resolution.

Mr. R. R. Patil, General Secretary of the *Samata Sainik Dal* Conference seconded the resolution.

Mr. A. L. Kosare, Chairman of the Reception Committee declared that as there is no opposition, motion is carried unanimously. I now request Mr. Gopal Singh to occupy the Chair.

Sardar Gopal Singh occupied the chair and delivered his Presidential Address.

Mr. Gopal Singh (President) called upon Mr. U. L. Karandikar (Bombay) to move the first resolution.

Mr. U. L. Karandikar said,

Mr. President, the resolution which stands in my name runs thus :-

Resolution No. 1 .-- Support to All - India Depressed Classes Conference :

1. (A) That the Conference of the All-India *Samata Sainik Dal* heartily supports the resolutions passed at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference, and declares its resolute determination to carry out the provisions of the said resolutions in all possible ways, namely physically, financially and morally.

Branches of the Dal :

(B) That the Conference requests and appeals to the admirers and supporters of the *Samata Sainik Dal* to establish in every Province and prominent towns of the Provinces, the branches of the *Samata Sainik Dal*.

Constitution :

(C) That this Conference resolves that a Constitution for the All-India *Samata Sainik Dal* be framed and that for this purpose a Committee of the following gentlemen be formed. The Constitution framed by this Committee shall be submitted to the joint Sub-Committee of the Office Bearers of the *Samata Sainik Dal* of the C. P. and Berar and the Bombay Provinces, on whose approval, it shall become operative.

- (1) Mr. M. M. Sasalekar, Bombay.
- (2) " S. B. Jadhav.
- (3) " R. R. Patil, Nagpur.
- (4) " A. L. Kosare, B. A., Nagpur.
- (5) " P. L. K. Talib, Ph. D., Lucknow.

The resolution is very clear and needs no speech. I commend it for your unanimous acceptance.

Mr. M. M. Sasalekar seconded it.

The resolution was further supported by the following gentlemen.--

- (1) Mr. P. J. Roham, M. L. A. (Bombay).
- (2) " Parmar (Sindh)
- (3) " P. L. K. Talib, M. A., LL. B., Ph.D. (Lucknow).
- (4) " D. G. Jadhav, B. A., LL.B., M.L.A., Jalgaon.
- (5) " B. K. Gaikwad, M. L. A., Nasik.

Mr. Gopal Singh, the President said, as there is no opposition, I declare the resolution carried unanimously.*

The President called upon Mr. S. B. Jadhav to move the second resolution.

Accordingly Mr. S. B. Jadhav moved the resolution for unanimous acceptance.

Resolution No. 2

United Front against Fascist aggression :

2. That India is immediately threatened by the fascist aggression and the invasion of our motherland by the German and Japanese military hoards is imminent. At this critical hour the main task that faces the nation is to immediately build up a mighty anti-fascist aggression. This Conference therefore calls upon the Indian people to immediately build up such a united front of the people.

Mr. S. V. Gaikwad seconded the resolution.

Mr. Gopal Singh, the President declared the resolution carried unanimously.

* See Constitution of the Samata Sainik Dal at Appendix. II

Resolution No. 3**Next Session :**

The President moved the following resolution from the Chair.

3. That it is resolved that the venue of the Second All-India Samata Sainik Dal Conference be in the Punjab when the All-India Depressed Classes Conference is convened there.

There is no opposition. I declare the resolution carried unanimously.

I now request the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to address the Conference.

The Hon'ble Dr. Ambedkar was given rousing ovation when he rose to speak.

Address by Dr. Ambedkar

The following is the substance of Dr. Ambedkar's speech to the Samata Sainik Dal :

I am very glad to see this vast body of Volunteer Corps raised in the Province of C.P. This Volunteer Corps was first started in Bombay about the year 1926. The Samata Sainik Dal is an integral part of our general movement. Indeed it is its powerful instrument. The aims and objects of our movement have undergone a complete and a radical change. There was a time when our object was to obtain for our people a place of equality within the Hindu Society as a part and parcel of it. Today we stand for equality with the Hindus as a distinct and separate element in the National life of India. The aims and objects of the Samata Sainik Dal have also changed alongwith this change in the aims and objects of our movement. What led to formation of this Volunteer organization was the original object of our movement namely to foster the demand among the Depressed Classes for social equality with the Hindus. As its name implies, the organization was built up to bring about a reorganization of the Hindu society with a view to find for the Depressed Classes in the Hindu society a place of equality. Today its object is to obtain Social Equality with the Hindus by bringing about a complete separation

from the Hindus. We hope to achieve it by separation in religion. We have to go by stages. We had to begin our struggle with a demand for political equality by demanding political separation. This was most a difficult task, for the Depressed Classes could not find a safe and a secure platform from which to give vent to their political demands. There was a time when this was quite impossible. The Congress organization had become so dominant that in Bombay city they would not allow any other party to hold any political meeting. The Congress volunteers used to come and break-up such meetings. Nobody dared to hold a meeting. To meet this menace we decided to add to the original function of the Volunteer Corps a new duty namely to take part in politics and protect our platform from the turbulent and repressive activities of the Congress Volunteers. This proved a most efficacious method of dealing with the menace of the Congress Volunteers. I well remember the incident that took place in Bombay just about the time that I was going to the first Round Table Conference. The Congress held, in Bombay just near where I was living, a public meeting in the name of the Depressed Classes to condemn my going to the Round Table Conference and to declare that I was not true representative of the Depressed Classes. I told the organizers of the meeting that I did not mind any resolution being passed provided it was a meeting of the Depressed Classes and that their meeting was not the meeting of the Depressed Classes. They declined to desist from the line of action they had decided upon. In the evening the meeting was held. Our volunteers came in a body and to the utter discomfiture of the Congress Volunteers captured the meeting. The Congressmen had to run for their life leaving behind their chair, table and bell which was brought by our volunteers as a trophy. Our Volunteer Corps has been the strongest in Bombay. Nobody has ever dared to challenge our volunteers. If we have carried out our political activities without being molested by anybody it is because of the strength of our volunteer organization. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

You borrowed the idea from Bombay. But I see that you have left Bombay very much behind in the vastness of your organization. In this you excite my admiration. Bombay will

have to bestir itself to come up to your level. I implicitly believe in the necessity for this volunteer organization. It must not only be maintained, but it should be started in every Province and it should be so expanded until it has embraced every young man from the Depressed Classes within its membership.

There are people who object to such volunteer organizations. They are believers in Ahimsa and they object to these organizations and exhibitions of strength. I am myself a believer in Ahimsa. But I make a distinction between Ahimsa and meekness. Meekness is weakness, and weakness which is voluntarily imposed upon itself is not a virtue. In one of the Upanishadas there is a story of a lamb which went to God and lodged a complaint saying that he was the father of all the creatures and all the creatures were therefore brethren: but that notwithstanding this, every creature, said the lamb, was threatening its life forgetting all brotherly affection. How do you explain this ? asked the lamb to God. The reply God is alleged to have given is very instructive. God said you look so meek that even I am tempted to devour you. We have been very much like the lamb in the story and that is why every one has threatened to devour us. I am quite convinced that meekness in the sense of self-imposed weakness is not a virtue. I am a believer in Ahimsa, but in the sense defined by your great Saint Tukaram. Tukaram said and quite rightly that Ahimsa consisted of two things : (1) Love and Kindness towards all creatures, and (2) destruction of all evil-doers. The second part of this definition of Ahimsa is often lost sight of and it is because it is lost sight of that the doctrine of Ahimsa becomes so ridiculous. To destroy all evil-doers is the principal element in the doctrine of Ahimsa. Without that Ahimsa is an empty shell, only a beatitude. It ceases to be a positive duty. So long as we have no evil intention to do harm to anybody and so long as we have confined ourselves to destruction of all evil-doers, nobody can cavil at the acquisition and building up of strength. *Shakti* controlled by sheel is our ideal. You need not be afraid of any

criticism. Avoid doing wanton injury to anybody, exert to help every one who needs your help and you will be rendering great service to our people. Hitherto your activities have been mainly concerned with sustaining our political life. There are other fields to which you should extend your activities. In towns one often hears women being kidnapped by some rascals. In villages one often hears our people being tyrannized by the caste Hindus. These are cases in which you should exert yourselves. These are serious cases in which organizations like yours can only help.

I am glad you have passed a resolution to hold an All-India Conference of all Depressed Classes Volunteers Corps. It is a happy idea which if it fructifies will result in great good. I wish you all success.

I thank you and your President for allowing me to say these few words to you.

Mr. S.V. Ramteke expressed the thanks. Thereafter the President declared the Session as dissolved.¹

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¹ : Report of Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur Session - July 1942.

I WILL STAND BY YOU

“Bombay, Tuesday

The Assurance that he would strive his utmost for bettering the standard of living of the working class in this country was given by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, member for labour, Government of India, speaking at a tea party given in his honour by the President and members of the National Seamen's Union of India at the Taj Mahal Hotel on Tuesday the 21st July 1942 in the evening.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the Government which he joined was principally constituted for the purpose of helping the war and it was not reconstituted Government in the sense it had a programme for the reconstruction of economic and social life of the country.

Referring to the position of Indian Seamen, Dr. Ambedkar said that Indian Seamen were going to be one of the most important sections among India's labour population. With an enormous sea coast, the greatest need of India was a navy and the position of Indian Seamen in India's navy and Indian mercantile marine would be indeed great.

Mr. A.H. Mirza and Khan Sahib M.E. Serang of the National Seamen's Union, referred to some of the grievances of Indian Seamen such as the absence of any manning scale, fixing of the working hours on the board ships and also the lack of provision for compensation for Seamen in case of death by natural causes. They referred to the services rendered by Indian Seamen in this war that no less than 20,000 Indian Seamen were on the high seas and urged the ratification of the conclusions of the International Maritime Conference of 1936.

Among those present at the party were Sir Sultan Chinoy, Mr. Oscar H. Brown, Chief Presidency Magistrate, Mr. R. Mathalone, Dr. and Mrs. J.A. Collaco, Dr. M.R.A. Baig, Sheriff of Bombay, and officials of the shipping Companies.”¹



¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, 22nd July 1942.

I YIELD TO NONE IN MY DESIRE FOR THE FREEDOM OF THIS COUNTRY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in his speech at the Samata Sainik Dal reception held last night the 22nd July 1942 in the Bhatt High School Hall, Bombay, said,

“It is the patriotic duty of all Indians no matter to what political parties they belong to resist with all the power and resources at their command an attempt on the part of the Congress to launch civil disobedience movement in his country at this juncture and thus to create anarchy and chaos, which would unquestionably help and facilitate the subjugation of this country.

We did not interfere with the previous civil disobedience movement for the simple reason that at that time the situation was entirely different.

Today we have aggressive Japan standing right at the gates of India. The situation on the Egyptian and Russian fronts is none too happy.

I have not the slightest doubt that to start civil disobedience movement at such a juncture would be directly playing the game of the enemy. It is a game we will not allow the Congress or anybody else to play. It is a game of treachery to India.

I yield to none in my desire for the freedom of this country, but I do not want to drive out the British to help establishment of Japanese rule over this country.

It may be that the Congress Working Committee resolution is a mere bluff. If that is the case nothing need be done in the matter, but if the threat is actually put into practice then it will be the duty of the *Samata Sainik Dal* to use its organisation to bring Congress to its senses and to prevent anarchy and chaos in the city.

Before leaving for Delhi I shall issue a statement explaining the line of policy which the Independant Labour Party and other allied organisations must follow in the matter. I want you to study that statement and implicity to carry out the instructions given therein. concluded Dr. Ambedkar.”¹

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¹ The Bombay Chronicle, 23rd July 1942.

I WANT THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT IN YOUR HANDS

“Speaking at a reception given in his honour by the Depressed Classes Welfare Association, Delhi, this afternoon, the 23rd August 1942, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India, made an important statement about the future of his community *vis-a-vis* the constitutional goal of India.

He said ,

“I want to put the Depressed Classes on terms of equality with the other communities in India. I do not want you to remain servile to other communities, but I want to place the reins of Government in your hands. You should share in the political power of the country, on terms of equality with the Mussalmans.”

The right of Depressed Classes to share and partition the power and authority of the Government was recognised by the British Government.

Since 1940 the position of Depressed Classes had suffered a set back. Firstly, the Cripps Proposals *inter-alia* envisaged a settlement with the Congress and the Muslim League, and as long as such a settlement was reached, the Depressed Classes did not matter, “I hold that this was a great betrayal of the Depressed Classes,” declared Dr. Ambedkar.

Proceeding, he said that since that failure of the Cripps Mission, Public persons in India and abroad only talked of a settlement with the Congress and the Muslim League. The Congress has been trying to reach a settlement with the Muslim League, but had never bothered to reach a settlement with the Depressed Classes, and Gandhiji shortly before his arrest had declared that he did not recognise a separate identity for the Depressed Classes. He added, “It has therefore become very necessary to secure our position in the political life of the country; a position of perfect equality and sovereignty. Unless we secure such a position, we will be pushed back to our former position of servility and servitude.”

Earlier, Dr. Ambedkar had declared that he had no love for office and would be glad to go back to his work, if he found that his efforts to improve the lot of his community were not successful.---A.P.”¹

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the subject which were reported by ‘The Indian states’. The dimensions were :

Dr. Ambedkar referred to the agitation carried on by him on behalf of his community. He said that at the Round Table Conference he had claimed that the Depressed Classes were not a sub-section of the Hindus but had a separate important identity of their own. His claim was disputed by Mahatma Gandhi, who eventually lost the battle.

The Communal Award was a charter granting separate identity to Depressed Classes: Therefore, Gandhiji raised the question a second time by going on a fast. The Poona Pact was the result in which he again succeeded in retaining the individuality of his community.

The third landmark was the August Offer by the British Government in which it was clearly stated that no constitution for India would be acceptable to the British Government without the consent and concurrence of the Depressed Classes.”²

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1.: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 24th August 1942.

2.: The Indian States , 12th September 1942.

PRESENT DISORDERS HARMING ONLY INDIANS

"A huge crowd composed mostly of members of the Depressed Classes virtually laid seige to the Bombay Central Station this morning the 3rd November 1942 to receive Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India, who arrived by the Frontier Mail.

When the garlanding ceremony over, Dr. Ambedkar drove to his residence at Dadar where another crowd awaited his arrival.

It is understood that Dr. Ambedkar will leave for Mahad on November 10th and return three days later."¹

"Addressing a public meeting held under the auspices of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation at Kamgar Maidan, Parel, Bombay, on Sunday evening, the 8th November 1942, the Hon'ble Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India blamed Mr. Gandhi and the Congress for starting the present Civil Disobedience Campaign in India for which, he declared, there was not the slightest justification, especially in view of the offer made by Sir Stafford Cripps. The present disorders, which were committed by hirelings, did not cause any harm or damage to Government or to the British people but only to Indian themselves. Large and important sections in the country were not in favour of the movement, and he had no doubt that it would fail.

So far as the Depressed Classes were concerned, they did not and could not take any part in the movement. The Congress leaders were very anxious to placate the Muslims and they had several times approached the Muslim leader for a settlement; but they had so far ignored the demand of the Depressed Classes for their proper place in the future constitution of the country. The Congress was anxious to placate the Muslims, because the latter were strong and well organised. The Depressed Classes were ignored because they were not sufficiently strong or well organised. Dr. Ambedkar urged them to make themselves politically strong by organisation through the All India Scheduled Castes Federation and also by strengthening their volunteer army. He advised them to keep away from the present political movement.

¹ : The Bombay Chronicle , dated 4th November 1942.

Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj, President of the Federation, who presided, referred to some of the work done by Dr. Ambedkar as Member of the Viceroy's Council. He also revealed the fact that he had been selected as a member of the Indian delegation to the Pacific Relations Council in America and that he was shortly going to that country.

Dr. Ambedkar was profusely garlanded after the meeting was over.”¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 9th November 1942.

NON -BRAHMIN PARTY SHOULD REBUILD ITSELF

“ The Hon’ble Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India arrived in Bombay this morning the 12th January 1943. He is expected to stay in Bombay for a week.---A. P.”¹

“ The view that true democracy in India could be safe only in the hands of the Non-Brahmin Party was expressed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, while speaking at party given in his honour on behalf of the Maratha and allied communities at the R. M. Bhatt High School, Parel, Bombay on Sunday the 17th January 1943. He regretted that the Non-Brahmin Party which was in power in the Madras and Bombay Provinces had now disintegrated owing to various reasons, and expressed the hope that, profiting by the mistakes of the past, it would shed the minor differences that existed among its various sections and rebuild itself into a united and strong force again.

For the success of a party he mentioned three things as necessary- a leader, a good organisation and a clear and definite objective and programme. It was a pity that many members of the Non-Brahmin Party had left it and joined the Congress, but they were now regretting their mistake. It was necessary not only for members of the particular communities but also in the interest of democracy in India that the Non-Brahmin Party should rebuild itself and become a power.

Rao Bahadur R. S. Asavle, who presided and Rao Bahadur S.K. Bole addressed the gathering, stressed the importance of unity among the Marathas and other allied communities and urging co-operation between them and the party led by Dr. Ambedkar.”²

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle : dated 13th January 1943.

² : The Times of India : dated 18th January 1943.

JOIN ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCES

In the evening of 17th January 1943, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar addressed a gathering of the Depressed Classes held at Naigaum to congratulate Mr. S. A. Upsham and Mr. Shinde, on their appointment as supervisors of Municipal Schools in Bombay.

Dr. Ambedkar urged members of his community to take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them to join the Army, Navy and Air Forces.”¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 18th January 1943.

GANDHI AND JINNAH SHOULD RETIRE

"The Hon'ble Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Viceroy's Executive Council arrived in Bombay today, 2nd May 1943 by the Frontier Mail. Dr. Ambedkar will preside on May 7 and 8 over a Conference of representatives of labour, mill-owners and Government." ¹

"Asserting that Mr. Gandhi and the Congress High Command had displayed "utter political bankruptcy," the Hon'ble Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, pleaded at a mass meeting held under the auspices of the Scheduled Classes at Naigaum, Bombay on Sunday evening, the 9th May 1943 that Mr. Gandhi should retire from active politics. He added that Mr. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League, "who has taken up an impossible position should also retire." He emphasised that unless both these leaders quitted the stage, it was absolutely hopeless to make any move to lift Indian politics from the present quagmire. It was only then that Indian politics might be expected to move on a line that might help the country towards its progress.

Dr. Ambedkar said that Mr. Gandhi was by far the most fortunate politician that had ever been born. He was fortunate because he had all the necessities for effective politics for the mere asking, while other political leaders had to spend half their lives in collecting them. Mr. Gandhi had both "man-power and money-power" in abundance, while the late Mr. Tilak, Mr. Ranade and Mr. Gokhale, never had "money-power" and as for "man-power," they had to spend the whole of their lives in collecting it.

With all that, Mr. Gandhi's political career had been a series of failures during the last 25 years. His politics was no doubt very exciting as compared with the placid politics of Gokhale or Ranade. But there was one thing quite certain, namely, that the politics and methods of Gokhale and Ranade would never have

1 : The Sunday Chronicle : dated 2nd May. 1943.

led the country to its present unfortunate position of having to divide the country. Mr. Gandhi's politics had resulted in that tragedy. "Instead of getting *Swaraj* and discussing that solitary question," Dr. Ambedkar declared, "We at the end of the journey have been presented with totally different problems, which probably Gokhale and Ranade would never have permitted to arise."

"The people of India", continued Dr. Ambedkar, "have placed blind faith in Mr. Gandhi and the Congress High Command. They have completely lost critical faculty and they have never the courage to tell Mr. Gandhi where he is wrong."

Referring to the Congress rejection of the Cripps' proposals, Dr. Ambedkar said that whatever might be said about the proposals, in so far as the future was concerned, the Cripps proposals gave the Congress cent per cent what it wanted. The proposals gave it the constituent assembly to decide the form of constitution and also gave it the choice to have Dominion Status or Independence. In regard to the immediate Government, the proposals were as large as they could be in the circumstances dictated by the war. The only thing that was reserved was defence and the rest was transferred.

"Even a tyro in politics," Dr. Ambedkar said, "would have realised that 15 men on one side and the Defence Member on the other would have been a most unequal battle for the Defence Member to fight. Apart from that, any sensible man would have cared more for the proposals that related to the future than the proposals that related to the present. If the future proposals gave complete authority to the nation, then no sensible man could have rejected them because something was lacking in them which related to the immediate present". He emphasised that defence was the only means to attain freedom.

Appealing to the Scheduled Castes people to join the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, Dr. Ambedkar said that placed as they were, they had to organise themselves to protect their own interests. They should prepare themselves to fight their battle for political rights when the new constitution for India was

SWARAJ COULD BE IN HANDS OF LABOUR

“The utter hollowness and the superficiality of the present Labour Movement in India was deplored by the Hon’ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member to the Government of India, at a tea party given in his honour by the Bombay Presidency Committee of the Indian Federation of Labour, on Monday evening the 10th May 1943.

Maniben Kara welcomed Dr. Ambedkar and said that it was to be regretted that there was schism in the Labour Movement. She paid tribute to the ameliorative work done by Dr. Ambedkar within the short period since he took up the reins of office as Labour Member.

Dr. Ambedkar in reply advised the Labour leaders present to sink their differences and present a united front against capitalism.

Dr. Ambedkar referred to the growth of the Labour Movement in Britain and traced how it had captured the reins of Government twice wresting power from the hands of the ever-dominant Tories.

It was an example for the Indian Labour Movement to emulate.

He urged the need for the formation of a United Labour Party in this country, on the model of the British Labour Party.

In conclusion, Dr. Ambedkar said that if Democracy in England had failed, it was because it was in the hands of the Tories. It was, therefore, important in whose hands *Swaraj* would be.

He exhorted the Labour leaders of India to see that when *Swaraj* came it could be in the hands of Indian Labour.”¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle : dated 11th May 1943.

QUALIFY FOR ENJOYING THE RIGHTS

“ The Scheduled Castes Federation gave a reception to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, at the open plot near Gokuldas Pasta Road, Dadar this evening the 5th December 1943. Mr. B. V. Jadhav presided.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was garlanded on behalf of many Backward Classes organisations.

Replying to felicitations Dr. B. R. Ambedkar gave a review of his activities as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and the efforts he had made to get equal status with the Muslims and Hindus and a greater number of seats in the legislatures, for the Scheduled Castes. He also revealed that he had been able to get a sum rupees of three lakhs from the Government for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes.

After exhorting the audience to join in big numbers the Federation which alone could fight for their political rights, he asked them to educate themselves, unite for the common good, and qualify for enjoying the rights they were claiming.”¹

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¹ : The Bombay Chronicle : 6th December 1943.

SCHEDULED CASTES MUST DISCARD HINDUISM

"Replying to the welcome addresses by three scheduled castes' organisations, after the resolutions were disposed of at the Scheduled Castes' Conference, held at Cawnpore*, on January 31 1944, Dr. Ambedkar set out the role of his community in India of the future and appealed to youths to forge sanctions by developing organisational strength behind the Federation so that no party, not even the British Government would dare refuse to recognise their importance in the future scheme of India's constitutional development."

"We must resolve that in a free India of the future we will be a ruling race. We refuse to continue to play a role of subservience or accept a position in which we could be treated as servants, not masters," declared Dr. Ambedkar.

If and when a *Swaraj* Government is established in India, he asserted, Hindus, Muslims and the Scheduled Castes, 3 parties in the Country would share the political power.

He visualised the day when it would be possible to guarantee a minimum wage of Rs. 30 a month, provide housing for labour, and pensions as an insurance against old age to the poor.

His answer to those critics, who asked him to join the Congress, was simple, said Dr. Ambedkar. "I regard as more important the freedom of the scheduled castes in India, the community which has been the victim of domination and oppression for over 2000 years." He preferred to work for the unlift of his community rather than *Swaraj* for the country.

Dr. Ambedkar asked the people to ponder over the causes for their sufferings extending over a long period of 2000 years. The Hindu Dharma, he asserted, was the main cause. Of all religions in the world it was Hinduism that recognised caste distinctions and Untouchability. This was the cover, the clock, for all injustices perpetrated on the Scheduled Castes by caste Hindus. The position even today, he regretted to say, was that in villages they could not live with self-respect.

* Kanpur.

He, therefore, reiterated his conviction that they must discard Hinduism and refuse to submit to Indignities any longer.

What struck him most was that his community still continued to accept a position of humiliation only because caste Hindus persisted in dominating over them. He exhorted the people to rely on their own strength, shake off the notion that they were in any way inferior to any other community.

Proceeding Dr. Ambedkar emphasised the need of building up sanctions by organisational strength behind their political body-the Scheduled Castes Federation. The British Government, he said, was ever ready to show consideration to Muslims. If the Congress leaders, after their release, reached a settlement with Muslims on Pakistan or fifty-fifty basis agreement, what would be the position of the Scheduled Castes ? If they were to share political powers, they must be organised as one solid unit before they could successfully fight for their due rights in the future Governance of the country.

Stressing the value of women's contribution he observed that their movement could not succeed unless their women helped actively the work of intensification. He attached the greatest value, said the speaker, to the formation of volunteer corps at each town and village to spread the message of the Conference and carry it to villages even 200 miles away from cities. He urged that they must realise their responsibility to wipe out internal divisions among the Scheduled Castes when they demanded of other's removal of Untouchability."

Winding up the proceedings, Mr. Shivraj declared the two-day session close amidst shouts in appreciation of Dr. Ambedkar's services to his community."¹

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1 : The Free Press Journal, dated 1st February 1944.

“NOW OR NEVER” IS THE QUESTION BEFORE SCHEDULED CASTES

“The question for the Scheduled Castes was “now or never” said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council, replying to address of welcome presented by a number of Scheduled Castes organisations at Calcutta last night, the August 26th, 1944.

Dr. Ambedkar explained that the Indian Constitution would make India a Dominion. One of the fundamental implications of a Dominion was that His Majesty’s Government has no right to interfere with the making of an Indian constitution thereafter. Therefore whatever deficiency the Scheduled Castes might have if that deficiency was not made up now, they would never get chance of putting forward any political demands successfully in India. The question, therefore, was “now or never.” He felt that their victory was near and all that he wanted from was unity.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the whole life of Mr. Gandhi, his political activities and political strategy were directed to by-passing the demands of minorities. The Civil Disobedience Movement, the breaking of the Salt Law and all these “*tamashas*” that Mr. Gandhi had been performing had no other purpose. Mr. Gandhi had now come to realise that it was not possible to by-pass the political demands of minorities and that he must make a treaty with Mussalmans and with Sikhs. But he had no desire to recognise the demands of the Scheduled Castes community, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said. The Scheduled Castes were a weak people, but Providence had always been helping them. “You can well imagine what calamity would have happened to us if the Cripps Mission had succeeded. I thank God everyday that it failed.”

Dr. Ambedkar said that the Viceroy in his recent correspondence with Mr. Gandhi had laid down on fundamental condition that for the transference of power from the British to Indian hands, a mere agreement between Hindus and Muslims would not do. There must be a tripartite agreement, and an agreement with the Scheduled Castes community had been made a condition precedent to such a transference of political power. They should be very grateful for a declaration of that kind.

Dr. Ambedkar said that if the *Hindu Mahasabha* was prepared to accept the just demands of the Scheduled Castes, he would certainly join the *Mahasabha*. If the Congress was prepared to accept their just demands, he would have no hesitation in joining Congress.

But the question was whether these organisations were friends or enemies of the Scheduled Castes.”¹

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1 : The Bombay Chronicle : dated 28th August 1944.

DEPRESSED CLASSES ARE NOT A PART OF HINDU COMMUNITY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, is leaving Bombay by Madras Express this afternoon i.e. on 20th September 1944; for Hyderabad. He will be accompanied by several Depressed Class leaders.

It is learnt that after stopping at Hyderabad for a day, Dr. Ambedkar will proceed to Madras where he will make a very important pronouncement on the position of the Depressed Classes under the future constitution of India.

It is believed that the pronouncement will be based on the outcome of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks."¹

"When Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was on his tour to South India, he visited Hyderabad Provinces of Nizam for the first time on September 20, 1944. He was warmly and whole-heartedly welcomed at Nampalli and Secunderabad. He was greeted at Begumpeth Railway Station by Mr. J. Subaiyya, the Chairman of Scheduled Castes Federation, Hyderabad Provinces, Mrs. Subaiyya, Shrimati Rajmani Devi and Mr. Madre.

The visit became memorable by the enthusiastic welcome by men and women of Scheduled Castes Federation, Hyderabad. The guard of honour given to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by female Volunteers was so excelling that even the Viceroy never could have received such guard of honour. The whole atmosphere was filled with echoes "Ambedkar Zindabad." He was taken in a procession from Secunderabad Railway Station to "Paach-Bandhu-Seva-Hall" first and then to the big pandal where the function took place. On this occasion, the Reception Committee Chief, Premkumar welcomed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while, on behalf of Scheduled Castes Federation, Mr. J. H. Subaiyya presented an address to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar arose to speak amidst the thunderous applause. He spoke for 45 minutes in Hindi. He made all the audience spell-bound with his impressive speech and language

¹ : Bombay Chronicle, 20th September 1944.

touching to the hearts of people. He appealed all present to be united under the flag of Scheduled Castes Federation. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in his speech, said,¹ ”

“ Holding out a threat, Dr. Ambedkar said, if the members of the Scheduled Castes did not get a fair deal and due recognition of their rights and privileges they would fight it out, if need be, with their lives. Dr. Ambedkar clearly stated that if political power ever belonged to anyone it was to the three parties— Hindus, Muslims and Scheduled Castes. Nobody could deny them their rightful place, he asserted.

Recalling the memories of the Second Round Table Conference Dr. Ambedkar observed that Gandhi had no knowledge of the strategy and tactics of different parties at the First Round Table Conference. Therefore he was “ anxious that he should warn Gandhi about the land which lay ahead.” With this subject he took the first opportunity to speak at the Federal Structure Sub-Committee so that he could expose the whole business, Dr. Ambedkar stated. Gandhi, who followed him after some time, said, “ my heart is with Dr. Ambedkar, but my head is not with him.” Next morning before the proceedings opened, he asked Gandhi certain questions which were the cause of the quarrel between them. He asked whether Gandhi had any mandate from the Congress in support of the statement that he would welcome representation of the Indian Princes by nomination and whether the Congress was not opposed to indirect election, to which Gandhi had said that he had no objection, and whether the Home Rule Bill had not been rejected by the Congress for that very reason. Mr. Gandhi refused to answer the questions.

“ The point I want to illustrate by saying all this is that if India has been let down, it is not by me, it is not by the Scheduled Castes, it has been let down by Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and others ” Dr. Ambedkar added. Dr. Ambedkar further observed :

It is much better that the caste Hindus reconcile themselves to the fact that the Scheduled Castes are a separate element in the national life of India. We are in perfect accord with them

¹: Kamble B. C ; ‘ Samagra Ambedkar Charitra ’(Marathi) Vol. 17.
Pp. 66-67.

that this country should get its freedom. But any new Government, the *Swaraj* Government, must be a Government in which Hindus, Muslims and the Scheduled Castes are all heirs to sovereignty.

.... It seems to me the policy of Mr. Gandhi who acquires strength from the Congress, the largest party in the land, is to intimate the British Government and force it to come to terms without being obliged to grant the demands of the Scheduled Castes. Mr. Gandhi's whole aim in his political career ever since the minority problem began to loom large, has been one and one only, to neglect the Scheduled Castes, to by-pass them. I have had very unpleasant experience of Mr. Gandhi's tactics in this matter.

Dr. Ambedkar stated that at the Round Table Conference Gandhi tried to isolate him, to cut off every kind of support to his efforts. Every time Gandhi failed but ultimately he used a weapon, "which I am sorry to say no honest man would have used. He went to the Muslims and told them that he was prepared to concede the 14 points of Mr. Jinnah, provided the Muslims agreed not to support these dirty dogs, the Untouchables."

Dr. Ambedkar said that he had got in his possession an agreement which was drawn up between Gandhi and the Muslims at the Round Table Conference. Fortunately, the Muslims had a certain amount of sense of shame and did not support Gandhi. "1

However there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar which were covered by the Times of India. The dimensions were as under—Editors.

"He wanted to make it clear to the British Government that a real National Government would be one that was composed of Hindus, Muslims and the Depressed Classes. The Depressed Classes were not part of the Hindu community but constituted a different nation. The Depressed Classes were prepared to agitate and fight to gain their objects.

Dr. Ambedkar warned his community that great obstacles lay in their path. While Mr. Gandhi and the Hindus had accepted the demand of the Muslims for a due share in the Government, they had not accepted a similar demand made by the Depressed Classes.

¹ : Hyderabad Bulletine, 20th September 1944.

Reprinted : Bharill Chandra, Pp. 63-65.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that the Depressed Classes did not lag behind any other community in their love for India's freedom but they wanted the independence of their Community along with the independence of the country.

The address presented to Dr. Ambedkar by the Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation referred to the Gandhi-Jinnah talks and said that no understanding or agreement, whether openly or tacitly concluded, would be binding on the Depressed Classes unless it had the support of Dr. Ambedkar as their accredited leader."¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 22nd September 1944.

I AM NO OPPONENT OF NATIONALISM BUT...

"The Municipal Corporation Madras decided to present Civic Address to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Govt. of India, on Friday, the 22nd September 1944. It was arranged in the Ripon Buildings.

The chief guest, on arrival, was received by the Mayor, Commissioner and the Councillors. There was a large gathering present. The members of the Congress Principal Party were conspicuous by their absence.

The address which was read out by Dr. Syed Nizamathulla, Mayor, was presented enclosed in a beautiful silver casket. Dr. Ambedkar was garlanded and introduced to the Councillors present.¹

While replying to the address, Dr. Ambedkar said,

"The Governing class in this country is the Brahmin community. The 1937 elections resulted in our having Brahmin Prime Ministers in seven provinces with half the Ministry as Brahmin. If National Government was formed and if it goes into the hands of the Governing Class, do you really think that it will do better than the present Government of India which was criticised so much?

It is a very kind thought on your part to have decided to present me this address of welcome to your city. I am not a resident of Madras, and having played no part in civic life as such, I have no claim on your consideration. Nonetheless you have decided to present this address to me. I feel deeply grateful because it is something to which I cannot lay any claim. If I may refer to the fact and I do so without any spirit of controversy or criticism, I read in the papers that this address was not voted unanimously and that there was some amount of dissent (Laughter). I refer to this because I feel that I should welcome the address all the more than I would have done, if it was voted unanimously. Most of the acts which we do unanimously are either formal or acts which are nothing more than "conventional lies of civilisation" which we practically do every day which have no meaning at all (cheers). It is an indication at any rate that there was a part of the corporation which was sincere and insistent on presenting me this address.

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. 9, P. 337.

You have very kindly referred to my university career, the work I have done as a teacher, lawyer and Member of the Bombay Legislative Council in terms which are to my mind somewhat extravagant. Let me assure you that I am not so vain as to believe that what you said is really my due. I make it that the language you have used is indicative of the great sympathy which you have for the cause in which I have laboured so long and that what you have said is really in support of the cause than of my own individual personality.

Reference had been made to the work of the Madras Corporation in respect of the slum clearance, food for the children of working classes. It would not be appropriate if I were to parade what the Government of India has done in this connection. However, just to ward off criticism that has been sometimes levelled against the Government of India that it is a very slow machine and grinds very slowly. I may say that the Government of India during the last few years has not been an ideal body waiting upon time to carry out some of the most necessary reforms which every Government is bound to perform. I wish to refer to a great piece of work which Government of India has done for the working population during the last few years. I would refer to the scheme of technical training which has imparted skill to unskilled men to the extent of 68,000 people. There are three to four hundred training centres spread throughout India and it is our hope and aspiration that the scheme of technical training which we have built up will not be scrapped at the end of the war and that it would be a permanent part of the educational system of this country whereby children of the working classes who had no opportunity of reaching university education could have the opportunity of having better skill and thus improving their earning capacity (cheers). There are several places of legislation which the Government has put through during war. For instance, there is the provision of compulsory arbitration of industrial disputes. Hitherto the Government of India has no authority to prescribe terms and conditions of employment of workmen. It was only a matter for the private individual with nothing more than a private contract

between a worker and employer to determine the wages and conditions of employment. Today we have a law whereby if the Government of India was satisfied that the terms and conditions of employment were not satisfactory they had the authority to impose terms and conditions which they thought were right and proper. I hope that although this piece of legislation has emerged as a result of the war, it will not die with the war and that it would become a permanent of our legislation system in the country (cheers). What we have done, we are conscious, is indeed very small. But I do want the public to understand that the Government of India in the matter of legislation is not in a very happy position.

In the first place, a large part of the labour legislation is written has the authority and jurisdiction of the provinces. It is they who are in a position to make labour laws. The authority of the Government is found in what is called the concurrent piece of legislation. You are all aware that although the Government of India has been given a concurrent right to pass labour legislation, there is a definite provision in the Government of India Act that whether the legislation proceeds from provincial authority or from the concurrent jurisdiction of the central legislature, the administration of labour is entirely in the hands of the provincial Government. Consequently . . . when the Government of India thinks that it should undertake legislation through its concurrent powers of legislation, it has to consult the provincial Governments before it can do so. After all when the legislation is passed, it is to be carried out by the provincial Government and unless the Government of India has the prior consent of the provisional Government, it thinks, that there is no use of passing the legislations which the administrative bodies are not prepared to look at. These are our difficulties. Our legislative speed is not as fast as other people expect. But I would say and assure that the Government has no deadend heart. It is quick and is thinking of re-organisation in labour matters (Applause).

Many people criticise the Government of India and I wonder whether it is worthwhile doing so. The Government of India may not have done much; but does it matter? To me, it seems,

present, it does not. After all, the question is whether the New Government of India has done or will not do, the question to my mind which we all call National Government will do better. Let me humbly submit that it is a far more crucial question than the question which we are all thinking about. I am quite prepared to admit for the purpose of argument that the present Government of India may be taken as caretaker's Government. We are all looking forward to a new Government and the quest of questions which worries me is, will this National Government do better? I also express a certain degree of doubt. We are all saying that once we are given a power, adult suffrage, we will sweep all evils, make clearances, put everybody on the boulevards so that they can walk erect as human beings. I entertain grave doubts. I have studied sufficiently the history of European Government and I have been one of those who has been completely disillusioned of the allegation that has sometimes been made that all human evils will disappear once a parliamentary Government is established based upon adult suffrage. History gives no foundation and no support for a proposition of this kind. None whatever it seems to me that we are suffering from certain disillusionments or asking false questions ourselves. It is right to say that whether you have adult suffrage, or not, or a framework of a popular Government or a framework of any other Government, there is inherent in every society in every country, two classes—the Governing class and the subject class. Whether they come on the surface or whether they are hidden behind some kind of clouds, makes no matter. You give adult suffrage or any kind of power or election what happens is this. The Governing class is elected to govern, the subject class never gets a chance. Am I making a wide statement? I do not think so. There is a foundation for what I say.

Let us examine the results of the elections in 1937, we had the widest of suffrage, the results of elections and true votes. What happened in the seven Congress provinces? I do not wish to speak about it -- what I said then came to be true and the truth was that in this country, no matter what you do, you have got the Brahmin community as the Governing community (laughter). That came to surface. Nothing else did. In the seven provinces, we had Brahmin Prime Ministers. Half the

Ministry was Brahmin in composition. I am not saying this as a matter of criticism, but I am only stating facts. If the elections proved anything, it proved only this that in the heart of this country there was one community that was destined to be the governing class. It has come as the governing class. I do not think we should ask the question whether every country is not entitled to self-government but we should ask whether the governing class in any country has a sense of responsibility so that the government of that country can be entrusted to the community. We have forgotten the fact that the right to govern must be really decided in the light of the responsibility of the governing class. After all if the governing class is to govern, the question is, what is the outlook of that the governing class, what is philosophy, what does it believe in. If you have a governing class which believes in what you care graded inequality, one on the top of the other which does not believe in inequality, and believes that man is not man and he must not be touched and that a certain class alone is entitled to education and property and not the other and that the latter is born servile and must die in servility, the question that I ask is this. If a National Government was formed and if it went into the hands of the Governing class, do you really think that the Nation's Government will do better than the present Government of India ?

I am no opponent of a national Government, I am no opponent of *Swaraj*, I am no opponent of Independence. If I can be assured that I could have independence, education and welfare, which are promised to the nation, I certainly will fight for independence, for nationalism, for freedom (cheer & applause). But if all this long talk, tall philosophy is followed by nothing else then what we call "One step-dance" if it is confined to the Governing class and if political power is used to strengthen that community and to disfranchise the rights of others, then the present Government of India may not be criticised so much as it is being criticised now "(Loud applause)....." ¹

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¹ : The Liberator, dated 24-9-1944. Dr. Ambedkar on Reforms undertaken by Central Government, Reply to Civic Address.

* For comments of the Liberator in the Speech, See Appendix-III

UNITY IS OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar delivered a speech at a luncheon party given by Mr. P. Bala Subramaniya, Editor, Sunday Observer at Connemara Hotel, Madras on 23rd September 1944.

Dr. Ambedkar said,

As far as I have been able to study, the advent of the Non-Brahman party has been an event in the history of India. Many people had not even able to realize that the fundamental basis of the Non-Brahman party was not the communal aspect which the word Non-Brahman indicated. No matter who ran the Non-Brahman party, whether it was what they called the 'Intermediate class' which lay between the Brahmins at one end and the Untouchables at the other. The party could be nothing if it was not a party of democracy. Therefore everybody who believed in democracy had a deep concern in the interests and fortune of the party. The organisation of the Non-Brahmin party was an event in the history of the country. Its downfall was also equally an event to be remembered with a great deal of sorrow. Why the party crumbled in the 1937 elections was a question that the leaders of the party should ask themselves. After all in Madras they had the regime of the Non-Brahmin party for practically 24 years before the elections came. Then what was wrong for the Party to make it fall like a pack of cards notwithstanding the long period of office ? What was it that made the party unpopular with a large majority of Non-Brahmins themselves ? In my view two things were responsible for this downfall. Firstly, they had not been able to realize exactly what their differences were with Brahminical sections. Though they indulged in virulent criticism of Brahmins could any one of them say that those differences had been doctrinal ? How much Brahminism had they in them ? They were 'Nababs' and regarded themselves as second class Brahmins. Instead of abandoning Brahminism they had been holding on to the spirit of it as being the ideal they ought to reach. And their anger against Brahmins was that they (the Brahmins) gave them only a second class degree.

How could a party take roots when its followers did not know in clear terms what were doctrinal differences between the party to which they belonged and the party to which they were asked to oppose. So the failure to enunciate the doctrine of differences between the Brahminical sections and the Non-Brahmins was one of the reasons for the downfall of the party. The second reason for the downfall of the party was, it had very narrow political programme. The party had been described by its opponents as a party of job-hunters. That was the term the 'Hindu' had often used. I do not attach much importance to this criticism; for "If we are job-hunters, then the other side are no less than we are." One defect in the political programme of the Non-Brahmin Party had been that the party made it, its chief concern to secure a certain number of jobs for their youngmen. That was perfectly legitimate. But did Non-Brahmin youngmen for whom the party fought for twenty years to secure jobs in public services remember the Party after they had received emoluments for their jobs ? During the twenty years the party had been in office, it forgot the 90% of the Non-Brahmins living in the villages, leading an uneconomical life and getting into the clutches of the money-lenders.

I have examined the legislations enacted during this period and except for one solitary measure of land reform, the Non-Brahmin Party never bothered about the tenants and the peasants. That was the "Congress fellows stole their clothes quietly."

I have been greatly pained by the turn of the events. One thing I would like to impress was that a party was the only thing that would save them. A party needed a good leader, a party needed an organisation, a party needed a political platform.

But let us be too critical about leaders. Let us look at the Congress. Who would have accepted Mahatma Gandhi as a leader in any other country ? He was a man who had no vision, no knowledge, no judgement. He was a man who had been a failure all his life in public life. There was no important occasion when India was about to succeed when Mr. Gandhi had brought anything good. When Mr. Jinnah raised his Pakistan issue, two

or three years age, Mr. Gandhi called it a sin and turned a deaf ear. Ultimately the frankincense grew. Mr. Gandhi got frightened. He was grappling with it now by making a complete somersault. Yet he continued to be the leader in this country, because the Congress did not put its leader on his trial.

Let us take the case of Mr. Jinnah. He was an autocratic leader. You will be surprised to know that the league was entirely his show. But the Musalmans had rightly placed their faith in him. The Congress knew that any charge levelled against Mr. Gandhi would mean the disruption of the organisation and so tolerated a great deal of what was inconsistent with democracy. Therefore I would say to the Non-Brahmins, "Unity is of Supreme importance. Learn the Lesson before it is too late."

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I WAS FAR AHEAD OF . . . PATRIOTS OF INDIA

On Sunday the 24th September 1944 a meeting of the 'Untouchables' was held in Memorial Hall, Park Town, Madras under the Chairmanship of Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj. On arrival Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was greeted with thunderous clapping. In the meeting (1) Madras Adi Dravid Workers Association, (2) South Indian Buddhist Association, (3) Scheduled Castes Federation of the Civil and Military Station Bangalore, (4) Madras Scheduled Castes Students Association, (5) Andhra Provincial Scheduled Castes Welfare Association and other institutions presented Addresses to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. On this occasion a youth presented Dr. B.R. Ambedkar with a beautiful picture of the Lord Buddha which was drawn by himself.¹

Replying to the Addresses presented to him, Dr. Ambedkar said :--

"Let me begin my saying that in this city of Madras, I have heard two comments made by a very distinguished citizen of this city which have been very uncomplementary to me-the speeches recently made by the Rt. Hon'ble U. S. Shrinivas Shastri. Mr. Shastri on one occasion, when his mind was not perturbed by this issue of Pakistan and when he still regarded Mr. Gandhi as the embodiment of India's soul, who alone in fulness can represent India at any international gathering, said that whatever might happen, the public of India should take a great deal of precaution to see that under no circumstances I had a place in any international conference. I was somewhat surprised to hear that kind of language from that old venerable politician. I was searching my heart in order to find out whether really in the whole of my public career which I am ready to admit is not so extensive as that of the Rt. Honourable Shastri was probably as glorious as that of his. Whether during the short span of my public life, I have done something so disgraceful that India would be ashamed to see me sitting at an international gathering. I do not wish to use any abusive language, for I could have very easily said that the Rt. Hon'ble Shastri was a "lap-dog" of the British

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. P. 356.

Government. He has been sitting on the lap of the British Government all this while and if he had achieved any notoriety and greatness either in India or outside, it was largely due to the fact that the British Government had been pleased to make him a "show boy." I do not wish to say that what Mr. Shastri has said, is really croakings of an old crow sitting on a diseased bowel.

What is that most of the Congressmen have been generally saying? The Scheduled Castes have been inimical to the general interests of the country, it was stated. I would like to say that I have sat side by side with the greatest men in this country viz. Mr. Gandhi, the Rt. Hon'ble Shastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and I can enumerate a host of public men in India who undoubtedly occupy the first place and rank in India's politics. I have watched him doing what a Nationalist can be expected to do, and I am confident, not only confident but proud that whenever any public question came up at the Round Table Conference, I was far ahead of the gentlemen who are supposed to be the patriots of India (cheers).

Gandhi's Doings at R. T. C.

Most people assembled here do not know the doings of Mr. Gandhi at the R.T.C. You all think that the parts we played there were glorious ones. Is that the true story? What did Mr. Gandhi do? You all know that in 1931 when Gandhi attended the R.T.C. a mandate was imposed upon him that he should ask for Independence and that India should not accept anything less than Independence, something which was undoubtedly beyond the many super politicians in India were prepared to ask. What did he do? It is regrettable to state and I think in view of the fact that I am so invariably accused of having played the part of a "black leg" at the R.T.C. I must state the story, you will be surprised to hear what I may tell you. This old amiable gentleman who went to the R.T.C. with a mandate to demand nothing short of Independence, what did he do? He said to Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State, that he was quite prepared at this stage to be content with Provincial Autonomy, a most extraordinary thing. Those of us who do not belong to the Congress, on the other side, had taken up a stand that whether in 1931, India was

ripe or prepared for Dominion Status or not, the Indian people would insist in all circumstances to have at least some share of responsibility at the centre. Indians would never agree to be content with merely Provincial Autonomy but they would insist upon some introduction of responsibility at the centre. The old gentleman was of course expected to go much beyond that, as his mandate was Independence. Curiously, unfortunately and fatally for this country, the old gentleman was so manouvered that he was made to agree that in the circumstances of 1931, he was prepared to be content with and accept the recommendations by the Simon Commission. Gentlemen, who rescued the situation? Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State, and the Conservative Party which was in office, were very anxious to close down the R.T.C. A great point was that we had appointed a Tripartite Commission, representing the three Parties in the Parliament, the Liberal, Labour and Conservative Parties. Sir Samuel Hoare looked upon it as a point of honour that Parliament should stand by the recommendations of Simon Commission and should not proceed beyond what they had recommended. Mr. Gandhi's attitude was God-sent interference. The argument presented by Sir Samuel Hoare that if Mr. Gandhi is not the greatest man in India, who was greater than him? Who is Sapru, who is Dr. Ambedkar and who is Jinnah? If Mr. Gandhi is content with Provincial Autonomy, the whole show should be closed down and the Conference shut up and the Parliament should be proud to frame a bill in terms of the Simon Commission. I was one of those who protested against that kind of thing. We said such a thing we can never have and we can never be a party to it, we raised so much disturbance that the British Cabinet was obliged to appoint a small Cabinet Committee in order to take evidence as to what the real sense of the Representatives of the R.T.C. was. Representations were invited in order to test the case and I was one of the patient men who were called upon to give evidence before the Cabinet Committee. It was presided over by the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister and the Secretary were the other two members. I like to say and I am proud of the fact that I was one of those who told the Committee of the Cabinet that even the Depressed Classes will not tolerate the Parliament going back. Is

that an ignorable part that one can say I have played? Can it be said that the Scheduled Castes stood against responsibility at the centre? Let me tell you another instance. We have got innumerable Native States in this country, really 1/3 of our population lives under the rule of the Indian Princes, where there is no law, where everything is done at the personal authority and at personal whims of Princes. It was one of the decisions at the R.T.C. that the Indian States should be brought in as one of the elements in the All-India Federation. The great issue was whether the representations of the Indian States should be elected by the people themselves or whether the representatives of Indian States should be nominated by the Princes. It was one of the greatest issues over which a long controversy was going on for good many days. Probably, some of you may be under the impression that on an issue like this, so important, so vital, and I may say, so dear to Mr. Gandhi in his own terms, what was the attitude of Mr. Gandhi on this point? You will be surprised to hear that Mr. Gandhi bodily went over to the Princes nominating representatives of the States to the Conference. It was I alone, a single individual member of the R.T.C. who fought from the very beginning to the end over this issue (cheers). Even Rt. Hon'ble Shastri -- I may tell you very funny stories about this old gentleman -- (voices : we shall be glad to hear them). We were all very much opposed to Federation. It was one of the important points which I maintained from the beginning to the end that the politics of British India should not be mixed up with the politics of Indian States. British India has been separated from Indian India, particularly for over 150 years. No doubt, we have common destiny. Nonetheless, the fact remains that we in British India have travelled a different road. The Indian States have been going along a different road. We have got different sort of political education which they have not.

Problem of Indian States

We have inherited different political traditions, and therefore I was all along insisting that British India should be permitted to travel on her road for political emancipation rather than have her destiny mixed up complicated by the introduction of Indian States. Rt. Hon'ble Shastri was one of our colleagues, or

"conspirators". We were only three, Sir Chintamani, Shrinivas Shastri and myself who hugged only hearts with the British India. We had put him--(Shastri) up our Champion, being a glorious man who can command greater respect than a youngster one like me. A day before when he was to speak at the Plenary Session, I and Chintamani took him to lunch to know whether he was still sour. We found that he was. We walked from Jermy street to King James Palace when at 3 O' clock Rt. Hon'ble was scheduled to speak. My friends ! What did he say ? He got up and said, "My dear Prime Minister, I am a Champion". My heart and Sir Chintamani's were strong enough, otherwise we should have died of heart failure. Mr. Shastri said that he was in favour of Federation and he was running after me telling me that I was a strong patriot and I was up-turning our apple carts, why don't you keep quiet ? If Mr. Gandhi was sincere and if the cause of the people of Indian States was dearer to him, it was necessary that they should be emancipated from the tyranny and oppression of personal rule of the Princes. He was the first man who ought to have said that representation should be made by elections. Mr. Gandhi instead said, he was in favour of the Princes nominating their representatives. I may tell you one thing. There is one thing, I know that Mr. Gandhi knows very little of politics, (Laughter), I am not saying this in any carping spirit, I am not passing any judgement over him nor to receive cheap applause. But I know it is fact. What happened is this, I was present at the First R.T.C. Mr. Gandhi was not obvious I knew many things and snags, I knew what strategy and tactics different parties were adopting and I was very anxious that before Mr. Gandhi opened his mouth he should be warned about the land of lies, so that he may know what he should say and what he should not. At the second R.T.C. when Mr. Gandhi came I was also a member of Federal Structure Committee. Of course being a representative of the Scheduled Castes, I could not expect to have the first place by the side of the Lord Chancellor who presided (Laughter). Giving the order of names of persons, I sat somewhere in the last. Obviously, when Mr. Gandhi came on the first day, an agenda was placed before us for discussion. I was very much worried by the fact that having regard to Mr. Gandhi's immaturity

in political knowledge and having regard to the fact that he was not present at the first R.T.C. I was thirsting to get the first chance to speak so that I could expose the whole business and let Mr. Gandhi know what the situation was.

Dr. Ambedkar narrated here how he spoke to the Lord Chancellor of his little temperance and managed to be allowed by the Lord Chancellor to speak first. The Lord Chancellor asked Mr. Gandhi "if he has any objection", Mr. Gandhi for generosity's sake said 'no'. I spoke for about an hour and a half, and it was probably one of the largest speeches that I had made in that country. After having made the speech and having tendered false excuse, I had to keep appearances and walked out of the Conference. I was the only man sitting in the whole of London waiting for the approach of evening in order to find out what Mr. Gandhi has spoken. Precisely at midnight, a report of the proceedings of the Conference reached my door. On opening the packet delivered to me by the postman I found the very first sentence of Mr. Gandhi's speech "My heart is with Dr. Ambedkar but my head is not with him." "Everything that I had suggested in my speech he counteracted. I was very furious and I really had temperance although in the morning I had none (Cries of shame-shame). The next morning I went to the Conference. Mr. Gandhi and others were there. As the proceedings were open, I intervened and told the Lord Chancellor that before the proceedings commenced, I might be permitted to ask Mr. Gandhi certain questions. That is the cause of quarrel between myself and Mr. Gandhi. I asked Mr. Gandhi three questions. One of them was whether he had received any mandate from the Congress in support of this statements that he would welcome the representation of the Indian Princes by nomination and whether the matter was ever discussed by the Congress, whether the Congress had passed any resolutions and whether he was authorised to do anything. The other question asked him was related to the indirect elections : The Conservative Party was keen on having indirect elections to which we were all opposed. Mr. Gandhi had agreed in his speech that he saw no objection to indirect election. I asked Mr. Gandhi whether it was not a fact that this principle of indirect election was brought out in the Home Rule Bill prepared by Mrs. Annie Besant

and which was for that very reason rejected by the Congress. The other question I forget at this distance of time. The Lord Chancellor turning to Mr. Gandhi asked him what answer he had to give. Mr. Gandhi refused to give any answer.

If the past has been sold, if India has been let down, it is not by me, it is not by Scheduled Castes, it is let down by Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Shastri and others.

Parallel from Ireland

Proceeding of the situation in Ireland and how a last effort was made in 1916 towards uniting of the country, referring to the conversation between Mr. Redmond representing the Southern Irish Catholics and Sir Edward Carson, the Irish Leader, and the reply that Carson gave to Redmond when the latter asked the former to ask for any safeguards he liked : "Damn your safeguards. I do not want to be ruled by you. "I would like to tell the Hindu brethren that we in India have a thousand excuses to adopt the attitude of Mr. Carson. We were in justice bound to tell the Hindus, "Damn your safeguards, we do not want your rule." Did we say so ? Have we said it either ? No, we have not said it, although we have every right and every justification to say so. We have played our part in much more humbler manner. We have said, "if you want Home Rule which as the President of Hindu Maha-Sabha said would be nothing more than Home Rule." Still we are large hearted enough because, we realise the interest of the country as a whole. We have said if you want Home Rule, you have it; we will support you. There is only one small condition that we maintain and that conditions is : give us reasonable safeguards. That is an attitude which is much more nobler than the one adopted by Carson.

I would like to ask Mr. Shastri, Mr. Gandhi or any Congress politician whether this attitude is not patriotic, whether it is not noble-minded, or whether it is not generous. How much we are forgetting the Brahmanical rule under which we have been suffering for the last 2,000 years in the hope that if we are given safeguards, we may with the help of the other generous elements in the country be able to build up a system in which not only this

country will grow to its fullest manhood and nationhood. Can you expect greater generosity, greater and nobler spirit than the one we exhibited in all this political controversy. I therefore would like to tell our Hindu brethren that they should better revise their mentality and take into account the sacrifices we are prepared to make, the risks we are prepared to take. Let us come to terms and settle this question. I am quite willing, and prepared to agree. But unfortunately, I have not found adequate response from the Hindu Community. They had been poohpoohing every time we raised our heads.

I recalled how in 1932 when the question of the Scheduled Castes first came under the surface and was placed on the same plane as that of the Muslims and whenever the Franchise Committee went in order to investigate and ascertain the total number of Scheduled Castes people in the different Provinces, I found that all Hindus liberal, narrow minded, broad minded Hindu, all joining together in one conspiracy to tell the Committee that there was no such a thing as Depressed or Scheduled Classes in our country, (shame, shame). It was the same story in U.P., Bihar, Punjab and other places. Why ? The answer is very simple. Our Hindu brethren had come to realise that His Majesty's Government had decided to give separate representation to the Scheduled Classes in the Legislature and that the amount of representation would depend upon the Scheduled Castes, and as they could not defeat the project of His Majesty's Government, these subterranean methods were employed to defeat this project by saying that there were no Scheduled Castes at all. That was the sort of strategy, a mean strategy that was employed by the Hindus in 1932. Today I find the Hindus are employing another sort of strategy.

Gandhi-Wavell Correspondence

I drew the attention of the gathering to the Gandhi-Wavell Correspondence particularising the one letter, dated 15th July 1944, which I said was very important and critical. The Viceroy in the letter had stated that while His Majesty's Government was prepared to grant India freedom at the end of the war, His Majesty's Government insist upon one thing viz. that the constitution shall come into existence which will have the consent of what you call

the important elements in the national life of India. The Viceroy also went further and particularised what important elements were there. Fortunately for us, and unfortunately for our Hindu brethren I mentioned the Scheduled Classes as an important element in the National Life of India (cheers).

Separate Representation for Scheduled Castes

I also referred to the controversy in some sections of the Press that this statement of the Viceroy was new and that it was a departure from the proposals which were put forward on behalf of His Majesty's Government by Sir Strafford Cripps. That is the thing which annoyed me and I could not understand the false and malicious propaganda. I looked to the Hindu Newspapermen and Editors at last to keep themselves thoroughly informed of what they were talking about, know the fact and then launch upon any criticism they liked to make I need not say how strongly the Simon Commission emphasised the need for giving separate representation to the Scheduled Castes. Could anybody say that the Scheduled Castes were not a separate and an important element ? What made His Majesty's Government give them separate representation at the R.T.C. They had not been a sub-head, or a branch, or a sub-community of the Hindus. Why should His Majesty's Government give them separate representation ? They were given separate representation because they (His Majesty's Government) recognised the fact that they were a separate element. Then there was the J.P.C. Report. It is all old history. There has been a great deal after.

I would like to tell our Hindu brethren that it is much better that they drop this idea, and reconcile themselves to the fact that for good or bad, the Scheduled Castes are a separate element in the National life of India. I like to tell them in categorical terms and in a precise manner, make no mistake about it.

Jinnah - Gandhi Talks

I have nothing else to say on the main problem. People have been asking me, why don't you say something about the talks that

are going on between Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Gandhi. I really do not know that anybody can say something about these talks. The talks are so prolonged that one is in a very difficult position to speculate what is going on between these two old and amiable gentlemen, or whether there is life in the talks. But, I would like to say one thing. I do not take these conversations and I will give you some reasons. The communal problem was not mostly a problem between the Hindus and the Muslims. The communal problem was a wider problem. It was a problem where not only Muslims but also Christians, Scheduled Classes and probably other minorities were involved. Consequently in a matter of such nature, the wisest, safest and the most honest course would be for all representatives of the different minorities to sit together, place their cards on the table, let each one know what the other one is asking and let all of them get in common consultation with just regards to their rights of others and give a decision which might be upheld by all. These sectional settlement and arrangements have a bad smell and a bad odour. They appear to me as deals between the two men who have decided to rob the third man and better their position. I do not know what Mr. Jinnah is demanding from Mr. Gandhi. I do not know what Mr. Gandhi is inclined to give to Mr. Jinnah. But I am very much perturbed that if Mr. Gandhi gives Mr. Jinnah something more than Mr. Jinnah is entitled to, that something more is going to someone out of my share. You can, therefore, well understand why I am so very concerned about their talks. It is the most important policy of Mr. Gandhi somehow to acquire strength for the Congress by getting the help of the largest party in this country and to intimidate the British Government and to force it to come to terms without being obliged to grant the demand of the Scheduled Castes.

Mr. Gandhi in all his public career ever since the communal problem has loomed large has done only one thing and that is to neglect the Scheduled Castes (cries of Shame, Shame) to by-pass them and to leave them where they are. In this connection I referred to my unpleasant experience of Mr. Gandhi's tactics in this matter. At the R. T. C. Mr. Gandhi tried to isolate me. I am not going to use the language of Hitler that he was encircling me (Laughter) which was a better word. Although he did isolate me

and cut off every kind of support which I made on behalf of the Scheduled Castes. For a long time he failed and ultimately he used a weapon which I am sorry to say, no honest men would have used. He went to the Muslims and told Mr. Jinnah that he was prepared to grant his 14 demands and bargained for one concession. Mr. Jinnah was told that he should not agree to "this dirty dog of Untouchables." I have got in my possession a document which was drawn up between the Muslim League and Mr. Gandhi at the R.T.C. I am not speaking without any authority. Fortunately for us the Muslims had a certain amount of sense of shame and remorse. I hope and trust that he (Mr. Gandhi) had not tried it on this occasion whom he is meeting with Mr. Jinnah.

You should realise what our object is. Our aim and aspiration is to be a governing community. Let all of you bear that in mind and let all of you write it on the walls of your houses so that every day you should remember that the aspirations which we cherish, and the cause, which we are having is not a cause of a petty character. It is the biggest cause that we ever cherished in our hearts. That is to see that we are recognised as the Governing Community. If you realise that, you will recognise what tremendous effort we have to make in order to carry it into effect. Mere words will not count, mere resolutions will not count. It may be that Mr. Gandhi will treat this as bluff and put it aside. We shall have to prove both Mr. Gandhi and His Majesty's Government, and I repeat, even to His Majesty's Government this time we mean business (Hear, hear). Absolute business, and we shall demand business from His Majesty's Government. We shall allow nobody to shilly-shally. When His Majesty's Government has given a word we shall expect His Majesty's Government to honour that word. There is no use depending on the good will of His Majesty's Government, nor is there any use in depending on the good ourselves. We must build up our own strength. We must remove other causes.

Come Under One Banner

I had been noticing great enthusiasm among the Scheduled Castes perhaps due to my arrival in the city. You could never gather strength by carrying on your local activities in a local manner and with local spirit. You must all learn to come under one banner, under one association and under a single political body, and thereby make the world that you were united under one Organisation known as the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation. I thanked the organisers for the honour done to me.

Some among the gathering insisted that my speech be translated into Tamil. They were assured that the Tamil translation of the speech would be printed and circulated among them free of charge.

The meeting terminated with cries of "Long Live Dr. Ambedkar."¹



¹ :The Mail, dated 26th September 1944.

INDIAN HISTORY IS NOTHING BUT STRUGGLE BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND BRAHMINISM

While staying at Madras, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar got several invitations from various Institutions for delivering speeches. Among the invitees was Madras Rational Society which arranged his speech on "Rationalism in India" on Sunday the 24th September 1944 in Prabhat Talkies, Broadway, Madras, under the Chairmanship of Ex-Minister Ramanathan. On this occasion Sau. M. M. Muthu greeted Dr. Ambedkar.¹

Dr. Ambedkar said,

"The subject of rationalism in India is undoubtedly of great interest to Indians and one of profound influence. So as the Hindu society and a social life are concerned, the subject has been completely neglected. There has been very many false notions about India's history which have been given currency to buy persons who have very great authority in the field of literature. It has been said by very profound writers of Indian History that India has had no politics at all and that all ancient Indian writers concerned themselves with writing about philosophy, religion, metaphysics and that they have not bothered about politics. It has been alleged that the ancient Indian people were not historical or a political race. That has been the opinion to this day. It has also been stated that India has no history at all and that though Indian life and society have been moving in a stereotyped steel frame which once fixed has remained as it has been, and consequently the historian of India has nothing else to do but to describe what the steelframe is. It has also been said that countries can be said to have some special and political revolutions undertaken with the object of changing the frame-work of political revolution before.

I have been only a politician and I can lay no claim for any profundity either as a student of literature or of history or philosophy. But I have elevated some part of my time to the study of an ancient history, and I have come to the opposite conclusions to these profounded by many scholars. My study has shown to me that the ancient Indians have political race that history has known. No country in the ancient past has had such

¹: Khairmode, Vol. 9, P. 376.

revolution affecting the society morals. Government and philosophy which can be proved to have privilege of the ancient Indians. India probably was one of the countries which preached rationalism such as the kind of which the world before nowhere has seen. India has been a land of revolution in comparison to which the French Revolution would be only "Bagatella" and nothing more.

Differences between Brahminism and Buddhism

Students of Indian History, in my judgment, must bear one fact in mind and it is the one which has been completely neglected by the historians who have written about history of India. It is a fundamental fact and unless that was borne in mind, no one can understand the history of India. The fundamental fact is that there has in ancient India, a great struggle between Buddhism and Brahminism. The history of India is nothing if it is not one of great struggle. It is not even a struggle as has been repeated by professors of philosophy but a quarrel over some creed. It was not only a revolution in doctrine but a revolution in the political and social philosophy. The quarrel between Buddhism and Brahminism was on this one issue and that was "What is truth? What can be accepted as truth?" That is the bedrock of the question with which rationalism deals. The answer that Buddha gave as to what was truth was fundamentally different from the one which the Brahmins gave. Buddha said that truth was something to which any one of the "Dasa Indriyas" can bear witness. The Brahminic doctrine of truth was that it was something which was declared by Vedas (Laughter). They should make no mistake but that was the most important doctrine of Brahminism. The Buddhists were revolutionaries and Brahmins were counter-revolutionaries. That was the difference between Buddhism and Brahminism. Why the Brahmins from the ancient times insisted that the Vedas must be accepted as the Final authority of all social and religious doctrines, it is something difficult to say. But I am surprised that so clever a people like the ancient Brahmins should have insisted upon fastening such tremendous sanctity and authority on such books which consisted nothing else but tomfoolery.

Forgery in the Vedas

Dr. Ambedkar analysing some of the aspects of the Vedas by citing certain examples said that certain portions were a ' forgery ' which were introduced at later stage. They did it because they wanted some kind of sacred sanction for their theory. That to his mind was the only reason why the Brahmins had insisted upon so un-rationalistic an approach to social theories. The struggle between Buddhism and Brahminism was for supremacy. When Buddhism evaporated, they lost tremendously. Buddha was the first person to preach the message of liberty, equality, fraternity in the history of the world. They had lost because the revolution was so overwhelmed by the counter-revolution. They has also lost the spirit of rationalism, and that was the reason why the whole of the Hindu Society was in grossest superstition ; idolatory and all sorts of evil practices, which were practised in the name of the religion. Buddha's rationalistic approach to truth had been lost. Today they were in the grip of counter-revolutionaries. The gospel of the counter-revolutionaries is the Bhagvat Geeta and Manu Smruti.

The tragedy of today is that the non-rationalistic ideology has even entered politics. Political leaders are on trial in every country. But what is the solution in India ? Mr. Gandhi is never on trial (laughter). Has he been on trial ? No. If he says something, everybody must accept it as though it is from the Vedas. If he says the opposite, we have got to accept it. Two years ago Mr. Gandhi said Pakistan was a sin. Congressmen said it was a sin. I have also written a book on Pakistan and I was called as one whose intelligence has been mortgaged to the Muslim League and prostituted and all that. Today Mr. Gandhi says Pakistan is not a sin. This is only one illustration of irrationalism-which has not entered only our social and intellectual but also political thought.

I am sure unless we do something very quickly, we may bring greater disaster to this country " ¹



¹ : The Liberator, Madras, dated 25-9-1944.

GANDHI WAS CONTENTED WITH PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

On 24th September 1944, Dr. Ambedkar attacked Srinivasan Shastriar and Gandhiji vehemently in his speech at Shivraj Memorial Hall, Madras. ¹

He said,

“ In some of his recent speeches, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasan Shastriar has said that he considered Mr. Gandhi as the embodiment of India's soul, and that Mr. Gandhi should represent India at any international gathering and that great precautions should be taken to see that in no circumstances should persons like him (Dr. Ambedkar) be given a place at any future international conference.

“ I was searching my heart in order to find out whether really in the whole of my public career which I am ready to admit is not so extensive as that of the Rt. Honourable Shastriar nor probably as glorious as that of his, whether during the short span of my public life, I have done something so disgraceful that India would be ashamed to see me sitting at an International gathering. I do not wish to use my abusive language, for I could have very easily said that the Rt. Hon. Shastriar was a 'lap-dog' of the British Government. He has been sitting on the lap of the British Government all this, while and if he had achieved any notoriety and greatness either in India or outside, it was largely due to the fact that the British Government had been pleased to make him a 'Show-boy'. I do not wish to say that what Mr. Shastri has said is really croaking of an old crow sitting on the tree with the diseased bowels..... ”. “ What Mr. Shrinivasan Shastriar had said was probably typical of what most Congressmen had been saying, namely that the Scheduled Castes, in so far as they had been under his leadership, had been inimical to the general interests of the country. Most people did not know what Mr. Gandhi did at the Round Table Conference. They all thought that the part he played was a glorious one. The Mahatma went to the conference with a mandate to demand independence, something which was far beyond many sober politicians in

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. 9, P. 384.

India were prepared to ask. But what did Mr. Gandhi do ? This old medieval gentleman who went to the conference with a mandate to demand nothing short of independence said Sir Samuel Hoare that he was quite prepared to be content with provincial autonomy. (Cries of Shame)''¹

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¹ : The Mail, Madras, dated 26th September 1944.

WE ARE THE MAKERS OF THE DESTINY OF THIS COUNTRY

Accompanied by P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary, Scheduled Castes Federation and V. Ramkrishan, ACM, Labour Department, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar reached Rajmahendri on Thursday the 28th September 1944 in the afternoon. Dr. Ambedkar was presented with Civic Address on behalf of Municipality in the Museum Hall. Somina Kameshwar Rao, Municipal Chairman and K. Vyankatadri Chaudhari, Municipal Commissioner welcomed Dr. Ambedkar.¹

While replying to the Civic Address, Dr. Ambedkar said :

“ We are meeting today under the shadow of very sad piece of news that has come to us. It has been reported that the talks between Mr. Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah have failed. We have never been able to muster together. We have never been able to sink our differences and patch up things in order to march on. Something has always happened at the most critical moment. The Old Testament somewhere says, “ The Nation which has lost its vision will be destroyed. ” One of the defects which I have noticed in Mr. Gandhi is the complete lack of vision. I wonder what the founders of the Congress would think of this Pakistan. Those who met for the first time in 1885, in order to see that India get Home Rule, no doubt, by stages, never dreamt that the movement will be carried on in such a manner, in such a spirit, that just about the time when India was about to reach her destiny, India would be cut up in two parts. We are told that the old fellows who had started the Congress were too slow. They were only arm-chair philosophers and were doing nothing but sending letters to the Viceroy. It was said that those methods did not suit the country. The result was that the most dynamic movement was started under the aegis of Mr. Gandhi. We had mass movement and agitations. We had everything except light and vision. Mr. Gandhi is approximated to a large extent to Abraham Lincoln. The attitude that Abraham Lincoln took with regard to the question of slavery was very much the attitude about the minorities problem that Mr. Gandhi took in India. Abraham Lincoln was passionately devoted to the Union. He

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. 9, P. 394.

was the upholder of the slave system, yet the Proclamation of the Freedom of the Slaves was issued in 1863 by Abraham Lincoln. He was free to do so in order to win the Negroes to get their help for the Northern Armies. Mr. Gandhiji's attitude seemed to be exactly the same. He always said, "I want freedom, but I want *Chaturwarnashram Dharma*." One of the reasons why Mr. Gandhi had failed all along was because of this attitude of his. I hope and trust that Mr. Gandhi will be able to realise the mistake.

Every one desired Independence for the country. They did not, however, realise that there is in politics a graded system of equality. They wanted equality and liberty and freedom for minorities. Any Indian who objects to the provision of safeguards to the minority interests is not a friend of this country and he is not a democrat. He is the enemy of the country. May I again say that, this is probably the finest opportunity that this country has. There are many friends who believe that because the British Government has not given any clear declaration to the position of India after war that they are rather apprehensive as to what will happen. He did not feel apprehensive about India's future after the war. He did not believe that the destiny of this country would depend on the decision of one man, however great he might be, in the British Empire. We are the makers of the destiny of this country. The whole thing depends on how much solidarity we can build up among ourselves. If we could manage our internal affairs, our quarrels in such manner that we can draft a constitution which can be signed by all those who are the representatives of the different sections and communities in the country. We can send Mr. Gandhi as the single and solitary representative of the people to the Prime Minister or to any body. It depends upon what ideas Mr. Gandhi will have....."¹

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¹: The Hindu dated 2nd October 1944.

STUDENTS SHOULD SEE THAT DEGREE CARRIES POSITIVE KNOWLEDGE

“ The view that there had been a marked deterioration in the educational attainments of the student-world of the present generation was expressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, addressing a meeting of students of the Scheduled Castes held at the Students' Hall, Calcutta yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon 2nd January 1945.* Prof. J. C. Mondal of St. Paul's College presided.

In his speech Dr. Ambedkar attacked the All-India Students' Federation and asked the students to dissociate themselves from it and form an all-India organisation of the Scheduled Castes.

The All-India Students' Federation was a well-known body, he said, about whose activities they had often read. There was for some reason a separate organisation formed-Muslim Students- even there. He did not know the reasons but the Muslim students found it necessary to start their own organisation.

Many of them probably did not know, remarked the speaker, that politics was not his usual pasture. He had been driven into it. The field to which he took delight, the field to which he hoped to return after his term expired was the educational field. He had been a professor of economics and law and therefore he might be forgiven if he made some trenchant comments on the All-India Students' Federation from his intimate experience of the student world.

Dr. Ambedkar had no hesitation in saying that education in India had considerably deteriorated at present. Comparing the first products of their universities with the students that he had met during his professorial career, he had no hesitation in saying that there had been a marked deterioration in educational attainments of the student world. Mentioning in this connection the names of Justice Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gokhale, Sir Surendra Nath and Sir Sivaswamy Iyer, Dr. Ambedkar said : “I do not think I shall be regarded as very hostile or very ungenerous if I say that none of you of this generation would reach even the knees of those people.”

* Source of Date—Janata : dated 6th January 1945.

After pointing out that Government spent larger sums on education now-a-day than in the past, Dr. Ambedkar said that one of the reason for this deterioration was that students were more interested in politics than in learning. According to him that had been the bane of their education. He positively differed from the view that a set of politicians held that politics was legitimate pursuit of a student's activities.

Criticising the activities of the All-India Students' Federation, Dr. Ambedkar said that all those discussions of the Federation of which they found so much hub-bub in the Press, all that it was doing, was nothing but seconding the Congress resolutions in a very stale manner. He had found no originality in their discussions.

Giving his suggestions as to what students of the Scheduled Castes should do, Dr. Ambedkar said that, he advised them to form a separate organisation because he wanted them to keep themselves aloof from politics. It was necessary, he said, that they should dissociate themselves from the All-India Federation and bother more about the problems that were germane to the life of a student. He wanted them also to concern themselves with the difficulties which confronted them in their educational career. In this connection he said that he had heard that in private colleges no consideration was shown to the economic or social difficulties of the Scheduled Castes. No special provision was made for their admission and no special provision was made in the matter of scholarship. "All Students" he remarked, "are treated on the same footing, the rich and the poor, the multi-millionaire and the beggar."

If there had been an All-India organisation of the students of the Scheduled Castes communities and it had collected necessary data of their difficulties, they would have been able to compel the Government or the governing elements in the country to make due provision for allowing them to have a look into the matter. Dr. Ambedkar advised the students not only to get a

degree but to see that the degree carried with it some positive knowledge or attainment, that they had qualifications which they called 'sterling'. They must regard education as a serious matter and not a tea-time enjoyment.

In asking the students to form an All-India Organisation, Dr. Ambedkar said that, there had not yet been an All-India consciousness among them. They had been upto now living a provincial life." ¹



¹: People's Herald dated 10th January 1945.

LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A REGIME OF PROSPERITY FOR THE POVERTY-STRICKEN MILLIONS OF THE COUNTRY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered a speech on 3rd January 1945 at a conference held in the Bengal Secretariat, Calcutta.

He said,

Government of India wished to evolve a policy which would utilize the water resources of the country to the best advantage of everybody and put them to the purposes which they were made to serve in other countries. The Government of India have in mind Tennessee Valley Scheme operating in the United States of America. They are studying the Scheme and feel that something along that line can be done in India if the provinces offer their co-operation and agree to overcome provincial barriers which have held up so much of their progress and their prosperity.

As a preliminary step for securing the best use of the water-ways of the country, the Government of India have created a Central Organisation called the 'Central Technical Power Board' and are contemplating to create the Central Water Ways Irrigation and Navigation Commission.

The two organisations had been established to advise the Provinces as to how their water resources could best be utilised and how a project could be made to serve the purpose other than irrigation. Damodar river is the first project along that line. It would be a multi-purpose project. It will have the object of not only preventing floods in the Damodar but would also have the object of irrigation, navigation and production of electricity. The authority which would be in-charge of the Damodar Valley Project, after it was complete, would be more or less modelled on the Tennessee Valley Authority. It would be a co-operative undertaking in which the Centre and the Provinces of Bengal and Bihar would be partners. I hope Conference would leave aside all sectional points of view and proceed to its business

with a determination to agree upon the best solution and open a way to the inauguration of a new policy in regard to the water-ways and lay the foundation for a regime of prosperity for the poverty-stricken millions of the country.

The Government of India were anxious to give shape, form and life to the project and were also anxious that no time should be lost in doing so.



NEWSPAPER IN A MODERN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS FUNDAMENTAL BASIS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

Hon. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, performed on Wednesday afternoon the 3rd January 1945 the inauguration ceremony of the "People's Herald", the weekly organ of the All-India Scheduled Castes' Federation at 1-2 Sitaram Ghosh Steet, Calcutta, which is the office of the Federation. Hon. Mr. J. N. Mondal and Mr. R. L. Biswas on behalf of the provincial Federation welcomed Dr. Ambedkar.

The Hon'ble Mr. J. N. Mondal, President, Bengal Provincial Scheduled Castes Federation in welcoming Dr. Ambedkar said that his entire life was dedicated not only for the Scheduled Castes but also for other downtrodden masses of India. He was sure that the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes and of the downtrodden masses would come through the activities, leadership and guidance of Dr. Ambedkar.

Earlier, Mr. Rashik Lal Biswas in course of his speech said that the reason for the appearance of this weekly "People's Herald" at this juncture was obvious. In the new India which was to emerge shortly as the result of this war, the Hindu community would form the main ingredient, and of this Hindu element, the Scheduled Castes formed no inconsiderable part. These castes he added, had some peculiarities, traditions, rights and customs which marked them out from the other sections of the Hindus. The Scheduled Castes held a right to demand that these peculiarities be respected and that they should get their due position in the matter of education, appointments and all the benefits which any State could provide to its citizens. "This paper, therefore, comes into being as the All India organ of the Scheduled Castes which will voice their sentiments and legitimate aspirations, their grievances, and their demands, and also their views on the present day problems which India is facing and the composition of the future Indian State", he added.

In course of his speech, Dr. Ambedkar referred to the future of the Indian National Congress and stated that after Mahatma Gandhi's death it would be blown to pieces. Because, they could not conceive that a couple of hundreds of landlords and capitalists and a few misguided labour leaders could make a party. So far as fighting the British was concerned they could all unite but when the British would be going, when the vacuum would be created, when they would be seated in gaddi and would re-examine their social, and economic situation, would the landlords and peasants and capitalists and workers agree to live with each other in the Congress? The Congress would be blown to pieces the moment Swaraj was attained,

But affirmed he, the Scheduled Castes party would live for ever, it was an eternal party and they lived on certain fundamental principles. It was utter nonsense to say that they were fighting for loaves and fishes, they were fighting for the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity which were to abide in this country. Their principles transcended the limited cause which they had in view, namely the cause of the Scheduled Castes. Theirs was the principle that would regenerate not only India but the world as well.

"Personally I do not think" said he, "there is any work in India which can be said to be nobler than the elevation of Scheduled Castes. I have many many friends in the Congress, who although dislike my politics, like me. They tell me that if I serve the wider cause of the country from within the Congress, I might one day become President of the Congress; Those appeals never allured me. I have always felt that as I have been born among these classes, it is my duty that I should do something for them first. I have also felt and quite convincingly I think, that if I or others who have the capacity to take up the cause of the Scheduled Castes leave the cause for other service and for other cause, no others will come to take up this cause and it will remain in the same rotten condition in which it has remained for the last two thousand years. But, that is only a limited view. I have struck to this cause as I regard it as a noble cause. What is the cause of the Hindus? What is the cause of the Congress? What is the talk of national freedom? So far as

the cause of Hindus is concerned it is the cause of the parasitic class, which has been living upon the blood, money and work of the toiling millions of this country. Would anybody, asked Dr. Ambedkar, who has understood political and moral philosophy and has come to believe that the salvation of world cannot be had unless the economic and social organisation of the world in every society is based upon liberty, equality and fraternity, can ever consent to give up the cause of Scheduled Castes, but serve the cause of Hindus ?

Then, take the cause of freedom of the country, proceeded Dr. Ambedkar. There is a world of difference between freedom by the powerful to oppress the weak and freedom of the weak to have an opportunity to grow fully to manhood. I would like to ask our Hindu patriots, who talk about this nonsense of freedom, etc., what use are they going to make of this freedom ? If the social freedom remains what it is, if the mentality is going to remain what it is, if the freedom that they will get from the Britishers is going to be used for suppressing the oppressed and suppressed classes, why should any one fight for it, I do not understand. If, on the other hand, you examine our cause, the principle we fight for, you will see it far transcends the limited class we have in view."

" A newspaper in a modern democratic system is the fundamental basis of good government. It is the one means of educating people. Therefore, we in India belonging to the Scheduled Castes whose misfortunes are the worst, for which there is no comparison and for which we are also anxious to get rid of, can never succeed unless the 8 crores of Untouchables, are politically educated. "—

Continuing he said : " If this paper can devote some part of its space for reporting the conduct of our M. L. A.'s in the various legislature telling the people, why they have done this and why they have not done that, I have no hesitation in my mind that there will be a great reform in the conduct of our M. L. A.'s and the present chaos, which is enough to bring disgrace to our community, will stop. I, therefore, look upon this paper as a great instrument for purifying those who have gone wrong in their political life."

Dr. Ambedkar then referred to a Marathi paper that did his electioning campaign in 1937 and he advised the newspaper not only to educate their voters but also to see that men who were elected by the voters, stood by the voters and functioned their duties properly and did not 'misbehave.'

While presiding over the ceremony amidst a large gathering of Scheduled Castes leaders and workers, he said that, the occasion provided for him an opportunity to unburden his soul fully, because it was such an occasion which he had the best desire to attend. While wishing the successful advance of 'People's Herald' to the cause of Scheduled Castes people of India and speaking of the great role this paper is destined to play in the service of their people, he said that the importance of a political organ of this nature can never be underrated. He revealed on this occasion that perhaps it was not so much known that he himself edited a weekly organ at Bombay for a continuous period of more than 16 years. The tremendous influence that paper created was seen in the next elections to the Assembly from Bombay proper wherein in a general constituency he was elected with votes from all communities and defeated the rival Congress candidate with a large majority of votes. The political influence that paper created went much towards his success. So, he wished a speedy success of 'People's Herald' and hoped that every member of the Scheduled Castes would make this paper as his own.

Congratulating the editor of the newspaper, Mr. P. C. De for his taking up this responsible task of serving the cause of the Scheduled Castes, Dr. Ambedkar said that he had noticed that many people in the country looked upon the work of the alleviation of the Scheduled Castes as nothing but 'Scavenging' and a 'dirty' piece of work.

Criticising the Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. Ambedkar said that, he had no hesitation in saying that their cause was the cause of a 'parasitic' which had been living upon the laboured money and work of the toiling millions of this country. The salvation of the world could not be had unless the economic, and the social organisation of the world and of other societies were based upon the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.¹

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¹: People's Herald, dated 10th January 1945.

SCHEDULED CASTES MUST ORGANISE

“ The need for the members of the Scheduled Castes to organise themselves and stand united under the banner of the All-India Scheduled Castes ' Federation for attaining social, economic, and political equality with the other major communities in the country was stressed by the Hon. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, when he addressed a mass meeting recently at Bombay.*

Dr. Ambedkar reviewed the work he had done for the betterment of the community since he joined the Viceroy's Executive Council. He was glad that Government had agreed to reserve a certain percentage of posts for the members of the Scheduled Castes. He was also able to secure two more seats in the Central Legislature to represent the interests of the community. Government had also agreed to make an annual grant of Rs. 3 lakhs to enable students of the community to prosecute their studies abroad. There remained much more to be done to lift the community from the present status but it all depended on how far the community stood united in its demands.

The Labour Member told the audience that his prime object in accepting the Executive Councillorship was to do as much good to the community as was possible. As a matter of fact, at his very first interview with the Viceroy, he presented a memorandum setting forth some of the grievances and demands of the community. He was glad that most of the demands had been agreed to, and in fact, in certain respects he could say that the Scheduled Castes had attained equality with the Muslim Community.”¹



* The date of address is not mentioned—Editor.

¹: People's Herald, dated 7th April, 1945.

THERE SHOULD BE STATUTORY COMMISSION FOR ABORIGINAL TRIBES

“The Third Conference of All India Scheduled Castes Federation was held on 5th and 6th May 1945 in Mumbai. This conference was important to understand the problems of eight crore Untouchables when tremendous activities were taking place, nationally and internationally. About one thousand delegates from all over India attended this Conference. Of these about five hundred delegates, with more than fifty women were from Nagpur alone, while about two hundred were from Gujrat. The lodging arrangement of these delegates was done at the Municipal school at Parel.

This Conference was held at the spacious ground ‘Nare Park’ of Parel, of which nomenclature was done as ‘Sadhvi Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar’. The ground was packed to its capacity with the people. Even though a ticket of ‘one rupee’ per head was charged, there were more than fifty thousand people, of which more than five thousand were women, who attended the open session. That time, about 2 to 2.5 lakhs Untouchable families were residing in Mumbai and minimum one person from at least 50 percent of these families attended this conference, many of these were old aged and many with their infants.

Initially, this conference was planned only for ‘Mumbai Scheduled Castes Federation’ in the last week of April 1945. But when Mr. S. B. Jadhav Secretary, ‘Mumbai Scheduled Castes Federation’ went to Delhi to meet Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who advised to change the nature of this Conference, that instead of limited to Mumbai it should be on all India basis. All the twenty committee members exerted and the membership was raised from six thousand to twenty thousand within a short time.

The Conference began in the evening of Saturday 5th May 1945. A large dais was prepared at one corner of the ground. At the centre of the dais the large painting of ‘Gautam Buddha’ was erected with decorated arches, as the Untouchables were respecting ‘Buddha’ as the first attacker of social discrimination existing in this country.

The various reception songs were sung in different languages. Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of the Federation, presented the working report of the previous year. Mr. S. B. Jadhav, General Secretary, Reception Committee, read out the messages sent for the Conference, which included the messages from Mr. C. D. Deshmukh ICS, Governor, Reserve Bank of India ; Dr. Alben Disoja, Mayor of Mumbai ; Mr. Modak, City Engineer, Sir Rustam Masani, National Warfront ; Mr. Madan, ICS ; Mr. Tauntan, ICS ; advisor Governor of Mumbai ; Sir Kawsaji Jahangir, Mr. Bala Saheb Kher, Former Chief Secretary, Mumbai region ; Mr. Sekhiya, Former Minister of Assam ; Mr. K. A. P. Vishwanathan of ' Madras Justice Party ' ; Mr. Prandatt of Kanpur ; Mr. Velankar of Mumbai Bar ; Mane and Mr. Manilal Parmar of Baroda etc.

On this occasion various conferences like ' Women Conference ' under the chairpersonship of Mrs. Meenambai Shivraj, ' Mumbai Municipal Workers Federation ' , ' Student Federation ' under the chairmanship of Mr. Pyarelal Talib, ' Samta Sainik Dal ' Conference under the presidentship of Mr. J. H. Subbaya were organised. In these conferences various delegates expressed the nature of atrocities committed on them by the touchables.

The historical address by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was delivered on Sunday, 6th May 1945 for which about one and half lakh people were present. ”¹

(Dr. B. R. Ambedkar prepared the speech for this Conference which was then published under the title the ' Communal Deadlock and a Way to Solve it. ' We are giving one para from the speech.—Editors.)

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his speech proposed the Scheme for upliftment of the Aboriginal Tribes is as follows :

“ It will be obvious that my proposals do not cover the Aboriginal Tribes although they are larger in number than the Sikhs, Anglo Indians, Indian Christians and Parsees. I may

¹: The text of the Speech is published in “ Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches ” Vol. 1, Pp. 355-379.

state the reasons why I have omitted them from my scheme. The Aboriginal Tribes have not as yet developed any political sense to make the best use of their political opportunities and they may easily become mere instruments in the hands either of a majority or a minority and thereby disturb the balance without doing any good to themselves. In the present stage of their development it seems to me that the proper thing to do for these backward communities is to establish a Statutory Commission to administer what are now called the 'excluded areas' on the same basis as was done in the case of the South African Constitution. Every Province in which these excluded areas are situated should be compelled to make an annual contribution of a prescribed amount for the administration of these areas." ¹

A. V. Thakkar, a prominent Congress leader from Bombay and the General Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh who was closely associated with Gandhiji, criticised the proposal for a communal settlement which was envisaged in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. His letter of criticism was published in the Times of India dated 17th may 1945.

**DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR'S REJOINDER TO
A. V. THAKKAR**

To,

The Editor, "The Times of India"

Sir,

Will you kindly allow me space to reply to the letter of Mr. Thakkar which appears in today's issue of *The Times of India* in which he criticised my proposals for a communal settlement? Mr. Thakkar has taken up the cudgels on behalf of the Aboriginal Tribes and has accused me of having shown utter disregard to the claim of these tribes in putting forth my proposals. Mr. Thakkar has sought to give point to his criticism by calling me a "doughty champion of the oppressed and the depressed." Let me tell Mr. Thakkar that I have never claimed to be a universal leader of suffering humanity. The problem of the Untouchables is quite enough for my slender strength, and I should be very happy if I could successfully rescue the Untouchables from his clutches and those of Mr. Gandhi.

¹: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1., P. 375.

I do not say that other causes are not equally noble. But knowing that life is short, one can serve only one cause and I have never aspired to do more than serve the Untouchables, who, as Mr. Thakkar says, are despised even by the Aboriginal Tribes. What is regrettable is that Mr. Thakkar should have formulated his criticisms on the basis of such extracts from my speech as have appeared in the papers. If he had cared to read the full text of my speech, he would have realised that far from excluding the cause of the Aboriginal Tribes, I had made what, according to my belief, I thought was a far better and a far effective proposal for their protection. There is no space available for setting out in detail this part of my proposal, and Mr. Thakkar would do well to consider my proposal, for the Aboriginal Tribes before rushing into the press to accuse me of partiality and small-mindedness.

The reason why I did not include the Aboriginal Tribes in the scheme of distribution of seats in the Legislature is not the result of my antipathy to them, but is entirely due to my belief that these Aboriginal Tribes do not as yet possess the political capacity which is necessary to exercise political power for one's own good. I should like to ask Mr. Thakkar whether, during the course of his career as a professional social servant for these Aboriginal Tribes and others, he has done anything to raise their educational standard so that they may know their own conditions, have aspirations to rise to the level of the highest Hindu and be in a position to use political power as a means to that end ? It is, I think, the saddest commentary on the work of Mr. Thakkar that during these 20 years he should not have been able to produce a single graduate from the Aboriginal Tribes.

Secondly, I would like Mr. Thakkar to tell me why is it that he has suddenly thought of enhancing the representation of the Aborigines in the Legislature ? In the Government of India Act, 1935, the representation given to the Aboriginal Tribes is almost negligible as compared with their population. Did Mr. Thakkar ever raise his voice against this inequity perpetrated by the Government of India Act ? What has Mr. Thakkar to say against the proposals of the Sapru Committee ? Probably Mr. Thakkar has no such malice against them as he has against me.

And, thirdly, if Mr. Thakkar desires that the Aboriginal Tribes should get representation in proportion to their population, nay that they should even get weightage, he must know that this can happen only by scaling down the representation of the Muslims. Is Mr. Thakkar prepared to fight with the Muslims his battle for the Aborigines ? Mr. Thakkar does not prove his love for the Untouchables by cutting into their representation. Mr. Thakkar is not proving a hero by raising his sword against a weak community like the Untouchables which has not received in the past even its fair share of representation. He would prove himself a lover of the Aborigines and their hero if he fought to get something out of the weightage enjoyed by the Muslims.”¹

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Bombay, 17th May 1945.

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¹: The Times of India, dated 18th May 1945.

NO DISPUTE OVER INDIA'S GOAL OF FREEDOM

“ Except the communal question, there is no dispute among the various parties in India,” said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, speaking at a party given in his honour by a group of friends at ‘ Cafe Model ’, Bombay, on Sunday the 20th May 1945. He added that there was no differences of opinion between the parties as to the ultimate goal of Indian political evolution-freedom.

Analysing the present situation, Dr. Ambedkar said, that it could be summed up in the question : “ Is a majority rule right ? ” His view was that it was wrong. It was wrong to consider that the needs of the State were paramount and those of the individual not, as that amounted to a Fascist or a Nazi doctrine. Protection of the individual, he further said, was the fundamental concern of the State and the suppression of the individual could not be tolerated.

Proceeding he said that the majority could be classed as political majority and communal majority. The former was always changing. That sort of majority was tolerable. But a “ born majority ” was not, he said. To settle this problem, he added, they had to depart from the principle of “ mere majority. ” That done, a solution for the problem facing them will have been found.

Turning to the question whether it was Dominion Status or Independence that was to be accepted, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was hardly a question of dispute. He considered the former as the first step in reaching the second. He personally felt that it would be better for India to accept Dominion Status. It was hardly of any use, he said, to win liberty which they could not retain. The determination Indians should make, he added, was not so much that they should free themselves from the British yoke, but they should be able to retain that freedom after having attained it.

The two important questions that a free India will have to tackle, Dr. Ambedkar said, were industrialisation and defence. He had grave doubts that India had all the resources necessary to proceed

along both the lines at the same time. Dominion Status, he said, imposed no obligation towards Britain, and according to International Law, it meant perfect sovereignty.

Referring to the work done by the Government for welfare of labour in the post-war period, he said that a Social Security Fact Finding Committee had been appointed which was expected to submit a report by August next, after which experts would be appointed to deal with the findings of the Committee.

Mr. G. N. Sahasrabudhe proposed a vote of thanks.”¹



¹ : The Times of India, dated 21st May 1945.

MAKE DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO MAKE MAN POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS

“The charge that the Congress had not been able to make any headway in solving many of the outstanding problems of the country simply because its leaders chose to remain ignorant and refused to study politics was made, by the Hon. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India, in a speech at Poona on Wednesday night, the October 3, 1945.

The occasion was the opening ceremony of the Dr. Ambedkar School of Politics in Poona, of which students of the Scheduled Castes interested in politics are members. Dr. Ambedkar said that before the entry of Mr. Gandhi in the sphere of politics in this country, two main political schools of thought held the field. The first was the school led by Mr. Ranade and Mr. Gokhale, which came to be known as the Liberal school of thought. The other school was led by the revolutionaries of Bengal. The important thing about them was that both the schools were “fool-proof and knave-proof.” The qualifications for the membership of the Liberal school were so high that neither fools nor knaves could get into the organisation. Their standard was study and knowledge. Only those well versed in politics could aspire for their platform.

The Revolutionary School also set a high standard. No man who was not prepared to play with his life could be member of that party. Mr. Gandhi's organisation, declared Dr. Ambedkar, had been thrown open to both fools and knaves. The cherished tradition of study and knowledge did not seem to appeal to the Congress organisation. This had led to many tragedies in the public life of the country, and the Congress had not been able to solve any vital problems, the communal question being one of them.

Dr. Ambedkar said that no institution or society could survive in the struggle for existence which was not free to make such adjustments in its ideas as time and circumstances required.

It was also true that a society which had inherited a set of ideas regarded as something sacred was not in a position to make adjustments. Such societies ultimately perished. Dr. Ambedkar declared that it was not proposed to found a school or creed of his own. He should be sorry if such a school came into existence after his death.

He knew the tragedies caused by the creation of political creeds. He was a keen student of politics in Maharashtra, and he was astonished to see how, when new problems arose, people met in committees and exercised their imagination, visualised and tried to guess what Mr. Tilak would have done in similar circumstances. It was a precarious sort of existence to be always dependent upon the inspiration of those men who had died long ago.

He appealed to the students to follow his lead only if they were satisfied in their minds that he was right. Dr. Ambedkar, however, commanded the object of the institution which was to permit the study of politics. He disagreed with those who believed that man was a political animal and said that one had to make the most deliberate attempt to make man politically conscious.”¹

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¹: The Times of India, dated 4th October 1945.

ACTION BY GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 1942 WAS JUSTIFIABLE

Replying to the address of the Ahmedabad Municipality, presented on 30th November 1945 * Dr. B. R. Ambedkar remarked that the drastic action taken by the Government in August 1942 was justifiable ; otherwise India would have been over-run by the Japanese and the Germans. This justification of the repression of the Government of the ' Quit India ' movement roused the sentiment of the poeple and added to their earlier prejudices. It was the main cause of the unbridgeable gap that separated the Depressed Classess from the rest of the people during the years of the struggle for freedom. ” ¹

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* Janata, dated 1st and 8th December 1945.

¹ : Kuber, B. R. Ambedkar, P. 58.

GANDHIJI DECLINED

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, in reply to the addresses presented by the Depressed Classes Federation, and the Municipal Worker's Federation, Sholapur on January 16th, 1946, referred to the series of Gandhi-Jinnah Talks in Bombay, and said that some six months ago he had written a letter to Mahatma Gandhi, but Gandhiji declined to meet him, saying that there was nothing common in their angles of vision (A. P.). ” ¹

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¹ : Bombay Chronicle, dated 17th January 1946.

SECHEDULED CASTES DEMANDS BE REFERRED TO AN IMPARTIAL INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL

On 17th February 1946 at Nare Park, Bombay, the gathering of 70,000 men and women loudly cheered Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, when he rose to inaugurate the election campaign.

In the meeting the gate money amounting Rs.17,000 was presented to Dr. Ambedkar for the campaign. Mr. G. M. Jadhav, President of the Federation's Bombay Branch, announced that the target aimed at for the campaign was Rs. 50,000 and would be approached by May.

The inauguration ceremony of the campaign was preceded by, the unfurling of the Scheduled Castes flag by Dr. Ambedkar, who was presented with a guard of honour by Scheduled Caste volunteers. Despite the huge attendance there was perfect order throughout the proceedings. Dr. Ambedkar's speech was punctuated by vociferous cheering.

If the Congress felt that the demands of the Scheduled Castes were unjust, let the matter be referred to an impartial international tribunal and he would abide by the decision, said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, inaugurating the election campaign of the Scheduled Castes Federation at Nare Park, Bombay. In the *Swaraj*, for which the Congress is shouting, he said, the Hindus would take the place of the British in dominating the nation.

In the past few days one heard speeches by Congressmen giving the impression that if a national Government were set up at the centre the food situation would be solved. Surely, said Dr. Ambedkar, the Congressmen would not perform a miracle. All this, talk of solving the food situation was empty talk.

Dr. Ambedkar, emphasising the need for strengthening the Scheduled Castes movement, said that the Congress had been shouting for *Swaraj*; but the Scheduled Castes could be certain that the *Swaraj* the Congress was asking for would only be domination by the Hindus instead of by the British. The Scheduled Castes must not allow that to happen. They must see that they got all their rights, so that in a free India they also were free.

The Scheduled Castes, he said, were not asking for a territorial division like the Muslims. All that they wanted was a fair deal. For centuries they had been suppressed, but now they refused to be exploited.

All that they wanted was equal political rights and no Patronage. If the Congress felt that their demands were not just, then let the matter be referred to an impartial international tribunal. He was prepared to abide by the verdict of such a tribunal.

Dr. Ambedkar added they were prepared to make every sacrifice in the attainment of their object. Let not the Congress or any other political organisation try to frighten them. During the primary elections to the Legislative Assembly in Bombay a Scheduled Castes voter was killed. Dr. Ambedkar fastened the responsibility for the death on the Congress and condemned the police lathi charges on the funeral procession of the murdered voter.

The Congress, Dr. Ambedkar observed, was out to dominate the entire political field in the country and in that attempt it even stooped to bribery. The Congress patronised individuals and tried to undermine organisations like the Scheduled Castes Federation.

But the Federation was now strong enough to resist such attempts and was gaining more and more strength. They would not have anything to do with the Hindus until their political rights were granted.

Dr. Ambedkar said that in the last few days one heard speeches by Congressmen giving the impression that if a national Government were set up at the Centre, the food situation would be solved. Surely, the Congressmen could not perform a miracle. All this talk of solving the food situation was empty talk, as if the replacement of a few members of the Executive Council by the Hindus was all that was necessary.

The Congress, he said, accused the British Government of pursuing the policy of divide and rule. That was exactly the game the Congress had played, with some success, as far as the Scheduled Castes Federation was concerned at the last general elections. He had no doubt that they would try their tactics again at the forthcoming elections, but the Scheduled Castes would not fall a prey to them.

The Scheduled Castes, he added, could not hope to compete with the Congress, which had the backing of the capitalists, in the matter of organisations at the time of the elections. No cars could be provided to carry voters to the polling booths. Every Scheduled Castes voter would, he felt sure, walk to the booths and exercise his franchise, thus showing to the world that they stood solidly behind the Federation. The strength of the Federation was amply proved at the primary elections at which the supporters of the Federation far outnumbered the Congress supporters. Seeing the results, the Congress ought to have stood out of the contest, if it were true to its professions of democracy.

Referring to the purse presented to him for the election campaign, Dr. Ambedkar said that although the amount was meagre he was not worried in the least as the campaign would be "Clean, honest and straight forward." The Congress leaders were collecting huge sums, for they would try to purchase votes.

Earlier, Mr. B. K. Gaikwad, addressing the gathering said that Mr. Gandhi had not done anything for the Scheduled Castes. He criticised Mr. Gandhi's recent speech at Madras wherein he said that the Scheduled Castes looked to Government because they could become Rao Bahadurs or get good jobs.

Dr. Ambedkar returned from his election tour of Satara and Belgam districts on Sunday morning and will leave Bombay for New Delhi on Monday evening."¹

However, there were additional dimentions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the subject which were reported by 'The Free Press Journal.' The dimentions were :

¹ : Jai Bheem : March 5, 1946.

“ We have no faith in the Hindus, who have treated us in a most vile and humiliating manner for the last 2,000 years, and now that we have been in a position to organise ourselves. We shall leave no stone unturned to get what has been long over due said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, addressing a largely attended meeting of the Scheduled Castes at Nare Park this evening.

Swaraj and National Government, he declared, meant only *Hindu Raj*, which they could no longer brook. Therefore, they demanded distribution of rights before the British quit India.”¹

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¹ : Free Press Journal, dated 18th February 1946.

DEPRESSED CLASSES NEGLECTED

* On 12th March, 1946, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar made a speech at Madras. He outlined the efforts made by him for the betterment of the Depressed Classes rights from the time of the First-Round-Table-Conference till the present and accused the Congress of thwarting them.

The Congress centred all its energies towards the neglect of the Depressed Classes. It approached the Muslims and devised a scheme to by-pass the Untouchables. Mr. Gandhi agreed to the 14 points of the Muslims on the condition that they would not support them. But thanks to the noble sense of humanity in the Muslims that they rejected this offer and thus did not agree to isolate the Untouchables.¹

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* The date of the speech might be other one as the date of speech and the issue of the 'Jai Bheem' appears as the same—Editors.

¹: Jai Bheem, Madras, 12th March 1946, "Congress attempts to by-pass the Untouchables".

THE SCHEDULED CASTES HAD BEEN LEFT WHERE THEY WERE.....

“ Deep regret at what he described as the ‘ Atom bomb dropped on the cause of the Scheduled Castes of India’ by the manner in which they had been treated by the British Cabinet Delegation, was expressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at a meeting held here today under the auspices of the Scheduled Castes Federation. Mr. J. N. Mandal, Minister, Government of Bengal, presided.

Dr. Ambedkar expressed surprise that only one seat in the interim Government was allotted to the Scheduled Castes of the country, who numbered 60 millions. Other communities, whose strength did not exceed three or four millions were also allotted one seat.

Declaring that it was the Scheduled Castes people of Bihar and Bombay who helped Britishers to establish their rule in this country. Dr. Ambedkar added that only the Hindus and Muslims in India had reaped the fruits of British rule during the last 150 years. The Scheduled Castes had been left where they were at the beginning. Wells remained closed to them as were temples, *Dharmasalas*, offices and Kacheries. The action of the Cabinet Mission, he added, had led them to the parting of ways.

Dr. Ambedkar warned the audience that unless they had political power in the coming struggle the Scheduled Castes of India would be doomed. Other communities, who had tremendous power and were habituated to treat them as ‘ pariah dogs,’ would crush them.

Dr. Ambedkar made an appeal to the Scheduled Castes members in the Provincial Assemblies to think of their duties at this hour of trial, of the making or marching of their destiny.

Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj, Secretary of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation also addressed the meeting.”¹



¹ : Jai Bheem : August 13, 1946.

Date and place are not mentioned—Editors.

I HAVE LOYALTY TO OUR PEOPLE ALSO TO THIS COUNTRY

“ The 55th birthday anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar, Saviour of the Scheduled Castes, was celebrated amidst joyful scenes of enthusiasm and rejoicing throughout Delhi. In view of the ban on public meetings in Delhi, on holding of public meetings to celebrate the function was given up this year but in accordance with the directive issued by the General Secretary of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, Federation Flags were hoisted in all important localities including the residence of the Hon'ble Mr. J. N. Mandal, Law member of the Interim Government. Prayers were also offered for the long life of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and all the Scheduled Castes houses were illuminated at night.

On the morning of the 14th April 1947, a purse of Rs. 1001, was presented to Baba Saheb on behalf of the Delhi Scheduled Castes Welfare Association (Karolbagh Branch). Another purse was also presented by certain individual members of the Scheduled Castes Federation.

Replying to the felicitations offered to him Baba Saheb made the following observations :—

“ If I would have been in Bombay today, I would have been mobbed by our people. I deliberately came down here on the 13th to escape from the large crowds because I want peace and tranquillity.

Celebrations of birthdays from one point of view are not very happy. As you know man is mortal and he must pass away some day. Birthdays are reminders that there have been several deductions from one's life. Of course, these deductions are not to be regretted by anybody because it is natural that man should spend his life. However, in a case where the life of a man is devoted to some public cause it does become a matter of some consideration.

Looking at the situation, I am, indeed, very happy to see that the Scheduled Castes all over India have now become so conscious of their disabilities and are now so well organised and so determined to achieve the fullness of their life that no man need despair of the future. As I told the Viceroy the other day, I do not mind telling it to you. I said to him "I would not have come to see you if you had not called me. I have no desire to run after the British." The British at one time had taken the responsibility of looking after the welfare of the Scheduled Castes. I had thought that they would take special steps to see that responsibility is carried out. If the British are going, I don't mind. But they are going without taking any special steps for securing such safeguards as we want in the constitution. It is for them to decide whether their action is right or not. It is not for me. Hundred times I had to persuade them that they ought to do something for the welfare of the Untouchables. I said, I am confident enough that the fate of the 60 million Untouchables will not be sealed simply because the British refuse to do their duty. I have no doubt in my mind that the 60 million Untouchables, without any support and without any power, would achieve what they want even if the Labour Government do not want to give them their due rights.

We, certainly today, are not the same old people, led by others with no consciousness and no organization. Everybody in this country knows that we are now quite different people. We, therefore, must cultivate more strength and power. Both the Congress and the Muslims League want our support and are making terms for that. This would have never happened if we were not so well organised. And I wanted to tell you this that unfortunately our issue has been completely clouded by the announcement of the British to quit India by June 1948. I have no idea what is going to happen. I have made some calculations, but I do not want to announce at present.

It may be that the British may have to stay here under circumstances quite different. But the decision of the British to quit has brought before the public some problems, which have, to some extent, obscured our demand for constitutional safeguards. I do hope that notwithstanding this clouding of the issue we shall succeed, if not wholly, to a very great extent in getting such political safeguards as are necessary for us.

I am glad to tell you that in the Committee for the formulation of the Fundamental Rights we have succeeded to a very great extent. A Memorandum which I had presented to the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee has been accepted by the Committee. There was one issue on which there has been certain difference of opinion ; that was with regard to the discrimination in administration and in the matter of public service. I have proposed certain measures in order to prevent that sort of discrimination and I believe that I will be successful. If that happens, so far as the Legislature or the Executive Committees are concerned, we shall have ample protection from the Constitution itself. The Minorities Sub-Committee will meet on the 17th of April and will continue its work for some time. I am very sorry to say that two members of the Scheduled Castes who are in the Minorities Sub-Committee have sent in a Memorandum which is contrary to the general views of the Scheduled Castes. One has proposed joint electorates than the Separate Electorates. He has proposed Joint Electorate by the distributive system of voting which is nothing but political slavery (Again cries of shame : shame;). I proposed to fight with my back to the wall and I hope, I will be able to get the support from other minority communities in the Sub-Committee. I do not want to say at this stage what is going to happen; whether the Committee is supposed to decide the issue by its majority or whether it proposes to negotiate is a matter about which I have no definite mind. But, if they decide the issue by majority I shall certainly take very definite steps to dissociate myself entirely from the Constituent Assembly (Loud cheers). We shall then decide what exactly to do. In this political matter as you know we are concerned with double loyalty, at least I am. I have loyalty to our people inhabiting this country and I am determined that all difficulties that they have faced so far shall be met by political safeguards. I have also loyalty to this country. I have no doubt that you have the same. All of us want this country to be free. So far as I am concerned my conduct has been guided by the consideration that we shall place no great difficulties in the way of this country achieving its freedom although we were ignored by the Cabinet Mission in the proposals

which they formulated. You know that I have delivered many speeches which have been guided by the consideration that this country should find it easy to achieve its freedom. At the same time I am quite determined to say that if the 60 million Untouchables are not safeguarded by means of political rights and if I do not find proper gesture on the part of the Congress people in the matter of settlement of the safeguards for the Scheduled Castes, no one, I am sure, will blame me if I take that step viz., to dissociate myself from the Constituent Assembly. You should, however, remember that in the Constituent Assembly of 292 or so I am one single, solitary individual. You should also bear in mind that no matter how great a man may have the intellect or the capacity to argue and to defend, he is after all one man, a single individual. If the rest of 291 are determined not to listen the reason, not to listen the argument but to oppose their opponent you can well realize my possible helplessness in the Constituent Assembly of 292 where I am only one.

I hope that good sense will prevail and we shall achieve what we want ultimately. What will count with us is an organization. You must also remember all political rights that we might get by our perpetual efforts are bound to be for a period. There will be a time when these rights will vanish, not only for us but for everybody in this country. When these rights vanish what we shall have to depend upon is our organization, our strength and unity. Therefore, we must be determined to unite. (Here Baba Saheb referred to the message sent to the Jai Bheem and narrated the story contained therein.)*

The only message which I can give you is suffering and more suffering. There can be no other method except through suffering and you should not be disheartened because our people in some villages have suffered and are undergoing great sufferings. We shall have to pursue our task with determination and decide to be organized. There need not be any fear of suffering in this country.

* See Pp. 83-85 Section I, part II, of this Volume, under title "Not to stop until the Untouchables Recover Manhood"

I am very glad to receive this purse from you. Now I have been thinking what I should do with this money. I propose to do one of the two things. One is that I should keep this money with some body in order that it may be devoted for the purpose of building the Club in Delhi for which I have arranged to purchase land. Though the sum is small we shall collect more for the purpose. The other thing is that this money should be returned to the Association so that they may use it for certain purposes. (The Association did not agree to take it back). All right, then it should be given to the fund collected for building the Club. ” —F.O.C.¹

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¹: Jai Bheem, dated May 25th, 1947.

THE MINORITY MUST ALWAYS BE WON OVER IT MUST NEVER BE DICTATED TO

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar inaugurated ' Siddharth College Parliament ' on 25th September 1947 at Bombay.

On this occasion he said,

“ I have not got any clear line of action before me for the present, and so I am thinking to speak in a military way. This independance has come so sudden that we had no time to recall our forces and we had no time to arrange our forces even.

The British inspite of their promises to us for the last fifty years, in the end, deceived us in not recognising the Scheduled Castes as separate political entity. They did not help us in the task. They helped the Musalmans and Sikhs. It is very curious to note at this stage as to why the British helped only the Musalmans, Sikhs and not the Scheduled Castes. We are left with no support. We had to depend upon nothing else but our own strength. And as you well know that this strength also was divided in the eyes of the British Political Surveyers like Cripps and his fellow friends in the delegation. They saw this division because of the separate organization of the so called Harijan Party. It is true and was true in reality that the Scheduled Castes Federation was the only representative body of the Scheduled Castes.

I am glad to say that, when I had been to England and discussed with many of the leaders of different political groups there, the permanent Parliamentary Secretaries, who were in day to-day touch of the Indian situation, had fully supported my saying that the Scheduled Castes Federation was the only representative body of the Scheduled Castes. Not only that but people like Mr. Cripps and many like him were convinced by my mission, but inspite of this the British Delegation over-ruled everything, because they wanted to take political decision for their safety even

though it was far from reality, and thus they took the political decision at our cost. This loss to the Scheduled Castes was due to the shameless attitude taken by the Rashtriya Harijans. In the Minority Sub-Committee I stressed our demand for Separate Electorate by suggesting a solution that a successful candidate should at last secure 35% of the votes of the community he represented but there, the hasty action of the Muslim group in leaving the hall at the time of voting made my proposal to secure equal votes for and against, i. e. 7 v/s 7. I tried myself in the Advisory Committee and a strange thing is that Mr. Manuswami Pillay, Speaker from the Madras Assembly, supported my amendment. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel also did not vote against it. But in the General Constituent Assembly, Mr. Pillay, one of my supporters, was one of the signatories to oppose this proposal. I was struck with wonder to all this. This is the second crooked role played by the Rashtriya Harijans to the permanent annoyance and common interest of the Scheduled Castes at large. It is for these reasons that I have not any clear line of action for the present.

Now, I must tell you one thing that the Separate Electorates alone are not only ends and means of the Scheduled Castes Federation. Separate Electorates with our means are good but in themselves, they are bad. You have got the Separate Electorates but no political safeguards. I don't know what will be their lot. I could succeed in getting you some political safeguards in Legislative Assemblies and services. It is because of my efforts that the rest of the minorities like Sikhs, Indian Christians and Muslims have some safeguards. Because it was only myself, who was so very insistent on this demand, the Constituent Assembly had no courage to displease me at this stage. I am glad to say that I could serve the minorities in the real sense of the term.

It is likely that you should have been disappointed and I am also not so much happy about it. Even then we have got to play our role in the future. I would like to tell you about the history of the British Labour Party. That party during the last 24 years has developed so much that today it has its rule.

The same party, when it was first organised, practically has no representation in the Parliament. What does it show ? It shows that not the success at the elections is the victory of the party, but the success of the principle and programme is the victory of the party. And I have no doubt that the Scheduled Castes Federation will have its role for the principles it stands for. It is for this, that I am not disappointed at all. It is for this reason that we must be aware of the following three things :

(i) The Scheduled Castes Federation must maintain its political existence under whatever circumstances. We have got the history of the Non-Brahmin Party before us. Before Congress came into prominence the All India Non-Brahmin Party was in its zenith. But when the leaders of the Non-Brahmin Party went individually in Congress for their individual purposes they were as if purchased, and as such they had no voice in Congress then and even now. Even though they are a vast majority they are ruled and their aid is greater responsible than the individuals;

(ii) You should have very able leaders. Yours leaders must have the courage and calibre to match the topmost leaders in any political party. The party without efficient leaders comes to nil. The defeat of the British Labour Party in 1931 was due to this fact. And this is equally applicable to the Non-Brahmin Party in India;

(iii) In any Party, just as the honest leadership which can never be sold is of vital importance, in the same way, devoted workers in the party is the second important thing essential for the growth of the party. The Scheduled Castes Federation has to create many but none to my satisfaction. In one way, the Scheduled Castes Federation has not to worry about because their leader will never be sold at whatever cost; but what of the rest of the organs ? When will they come up to the mark ? It is upto you to fulfil my need. I repeatedly tell you that Scheduled Castes Federation must maintain its political existence, not in my individual interest, but for you and me.

In the end, I tell you, make proper use of the facilities provided by the Siddharth College. I hope that therein only I shall be able to watch the rising star to the occasion to lead the Scheduled Castes and will prove his worth. Every man has two temptation in the world, first, the money and secondly, the wife and then the children follows. It is but natural; but our people do not understand the meaning of a few children. Then in the gulf, they have no time to look where Scheduled Castes stand. So it is upto you to stand to the need of the Scheduled Castes, at large. You must be able to create devoted workers. I do not know when our forces will be needed; but we should be on our guard to wait and see.

Hitherto, you must have noticed that while a large majority of our students had been interesting themselves in political movements they had not a clear realisation of what politics means, what responsibilities it involves and what methods must be pursued in order to bring political activities to function. There was, as I observe it, a complete dissociation of what we call academic life from the practical problems of life and politics. You will have to do two things :—

(i) to enlarge your minds, your vision, your capacity to think, your ability to solve problems; and

(ii) to bring that capacity, that vision, that ability to form judgment to bear upon the actual problems which the vast mass of the people of this country are facing today.

It is no more going to be mere incubation in our solitary room, in a chemistry or physics laboratory, it is something much wider than that. You will not merely learn political economy, political science, history, commerce, trade, currency, all the subjects which touch upon the practical life of people, but you will use that teaching, that learning to suggest not merely to yourselves but to the politicians in charge of the affairs of this country what are the right solutions of the problems before them and where they are going wrong.

There is one other things which you must also remember and it is this. In an autocracy where the laws are made by the wishes of a dictator or by an absolute monarch the art of speaking is unnecessary. No autocrat, no absolute monarch need pay any attention to eloquence because his will is law. But in a parliament where laws are made, no doubt by the wishes of the people, the man who succeeds in winning our opposition is the man who possesses the art to persuade his opponent. You cannot win over a majority in this House by giving a blackeye to your opponent. A minority is not going to curb a majority by bringing goondas, nor is the majority going to record and obtain a victory by laying low the members of the minority. You will have to carry a proposition only by the art of speaking, by persuading his opponent, by winning him over his side by argument, either gentle or strong, but always logically and instructively. Therefore, a supreme qualification for success in a parliamentary institution is the capacity to possess the House. Therefore, you should go to Parliament fully prepared to make a serious contribution to a serious subject and I also want to add that you should learn, very seriously the art of public speaking. It is not a very difficult art as I can tell you from my own experience. I am not a very great speaker and I do not know if anybody who would care to write the history of people in India who have played their part in Indian politics would find any justification to put me among the best speakers in India. I do not cover that honour. At one time, I was so much overwhelmed by my shyness which made me so nervous that I was on the point of giving up a job of a Professor in the Sydenham College for nothing else except for the fear that boys will probably run me down. But I can assure those of you who have similar fear to cast it away and to make an effort to acquire the command over language which is not a very difficult task at all.

Then, there must be absolute unconditional obedience to the ruling of the Speaker. You must never question the ruling of the Speaker. If there is a difficult point of order on which there is no precedent, on which, he cannot off hand, give his ruling, he will call on different sides of the House to express their point of view as to what is the correct interpretation of a certain ruling. But

after he has heard all the sides and proceeds to give his ruling, then, that ruling you must accept as sacrament. No matter how wrong that ruling is. I have been in parliamentary institutions from 1926 to 1946 with a very short break. I have known speakers of different varieties, good and others but we have observed the ruling. You can move a motion that a certain standing order to be amended.

It is unfortunate that you have no opportunity of what I call 'visual institutions' of how parliaments work. If you get a chance to go to Paris and see the actual session there or to London and see the House of Commons or go to the U.S.A. and see the House of Representatives, you will see wonderful difference between all these three bodies. In Paris you will see a wonderful assembly. Once I went to the Lower House in Paris on two or three successive days. I could not distinguish that August Assembly from the Crawford Market. People were moving from one place to another, from one corner to another, there was no order, nobody was listening to the Speaker, the poor Speaker had a big log of wood on his table and big hammer also of wood. He continuously hammered, there was no attention paid to him. But just the opposite was the condition in the House of Commons. There is a rule that no member can stand in the chair when the Speaker is standing. Every member must sit. When one member is standing no other member can stand in the chair. He must sit and listen. No member can begin to speak in the House of Commons unless the Speaker calls on him. There is no duty nor obligation on the Speaker to call upon any particular individual to speak. There is a phrase "That the Speaker calls upon such person as are able to catch his eye." That is a very delusive phrase- A Speaker may catch an eye and may deliberately wink at it. The reason is obvious. The Speaker having been in the chair for a number of years knows every individual, knows his good points, knows his bad points. As that he does is now known as his family history. He rarely, allows a man to speak who is tedious and who speaks but says nothing.

We have today what is called Parliamentary Democracy. Let us know that word. It is a very singular institution. It differs from autocracy or unlimited monarchy because in autocracy or

unlimited monarchy there is no such thing as parliament. People's wishes count for nothing. The King or the autocrat is the sole master of the situation. He claims to represent the will of the people and governs the people according to what might be called his own will.

We have another system in vogue which is called today the dictatorship of the proletariat. The difference between the two from our point of view is very minor. Autocracy has taken upon itself the obligation to serve what are called the masses but fundamentally this kind of dictatorship does not materially differ from absolute monarchy because in neither of them the people play any part. Parliamentary Democracy is a midway between the two. It is very delicate institution. Its characteristics ought to be noted very carefully in order that no violence has been described by a variety of political philosophers in a variety of different ways. Parliamentary Democracy has been described as Government by law. At one time this characteristic of Parliamentary Democracy that it was Government by law was undoubtedly very significant, very real. When monarchy was abolished in Europe and Parliamentary Democracy came into being and became operative, the generation which saw this change from absolute monarchy to Parliamentary Democracy could well understand that the description of the Parliamentary Democracy as Government by law was indeed very real and very significant. Because before it, the rule was personal rule. The ruler depended upon his wishes in the first place. Secondly, he always placed himself above the law. The law was for the people and not for himself. The rule of law which we now enjoy is a well established principle. We have so become used to it that we do not regard it as a matter of great virtue. But the significant fact that remains even now is that, when we make the law, we place even the makers of law below that law.

Some one has also said that Parliamentary Democracy is a democracy by majority. It is true that in our legislation there is a rule that all questions shall be decided by a majority. But I could ask to be very careful about that principle. It is one of the most dangerous principle that we have got. The majority rule has

been admitted merely for reasons for convenience. But for God's sake do not ride that principle too much. You will create a great deal of difficulties. In a certain sense the rule of majority is the wrong rule. I am prepared to argue that case. Let me illustrate. We are engaged in framing a Constitution. I have been placed at the head of it as its Chairman. We have to guard the fundamental right of the minorities. Do not forget that the fundamental right means that the majority has no right to do a certain thing. That is the meaning of the fundamental right. The fundamental right in a constitution puts absolute limitation upon the power of the majority to do a certain thing. As a matter of fact, the majority rule has come but by what I call a fluke.

If you examine the procedure of the House of Commons and the History of it, you will find that about the year fourteen fifteen hundreds of (what happened was this that) a motion was moved in the House of Commons : those in favour went and sat in one lobby, those who were against it sat in the other lobby. The Speaker asked the clerk how many were in Ayes' lobby and how many in Noes' lobby. He was told that there were 20 in the Noes' lobby and 50 in the Ayes' lobby. The Speaker did not declare the result of the motion. What he did was to tell the Ayes lobby to go into the Noes lobby and to persuade them to come and sit in the House and then only he declared the result. What does that mean, something very significant, that the majority cannot have a decision in its favour unless the speaker was confident that the minority, if not actively, at least passively was prepared to give consent. That was the original procedure. Later on for some reason this practice or this obligation upon the majority to go out and persuade their brethren in the opposite side to come back and to listen was dropped. However, although Parliamentary Democracy for the purpose accepted the principle of a majority rule do not think that you can by any way you like ill-treat or put to a disadvantage a minority. You will create a great deal of trouble for yourself in this very House. The minority must always be won over. It must never be dictated to.

There was another political philosophy - the philosophy of Walter Bagehot. He described parliamentary government as a government of discussion, which I think is very true description of parliamentary government. In a parliamentary government nothing is done behind the curtain, nothing is done as a result of the wishes of any particular individuals. Every subject is brought before the house either in the form of a bill or in the form of a resolution or some other motion.

When it is placed before the house it can be debated upon. It is a pity, great pity that we have not followed the great parliamentary practice of accepting of what we call the motion known as "enclosure" (Here the Speaker narrated in brief how Parnell harrassed Gladstone and Lord Northbrook by making some of 48 hours, 36 hours and 24 hours and as a result of this how the practice of "enclosure" was brought into opposition).

However, notwithstanding the fact that all the legislatures now do have such a rule that the debate be closed and the question be put, there is always enough time for discussion. Remember that the discussion that taken place in the parliament has relevance not merely to the decision of the issue which it undoubtedly has, but has far wider relevance and far wider significance. If the debate is on high level and is properly reported in the papers, obviously there cannot be a greater medium of political education for the people in general than a debate in the House of Commons. This, therefore, is a very important aspect.

It has been said that the parliamentary government is a self-government. No doubt logically it is so. But the most important thing that you will most remember is that what the country needs is a good government and the question is how can you have a good government ? A very important question ! I do not wish to dogmatise. There are one or two observations which I would like to place for your consideration because they need serious consideration. In my judgment there can be no dogma as to what constitutes good government. Different people may draw different ideas of good government. The capitalists think that a capitalist form of

government where there is a laissez faire is a good sort of government, the socialists, on the other hand, think that the socialistic form of government is a good government. There might be a variety of other people of their own brand. The fact is that there are a variety of opinions as to what constitutes good government. In a complex society, such as ours, with all its different ramifications, no sovereign remedy may be possible."



ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING COULD BE DEVELOPED

“ On 14th January 1948, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed a meeting of the Elocution Prize Distribution Ceremony of the Dhobi Talao Night School, which held its function at the Siddharth College premises.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar impressed upon the boys that the art of speaking in public could be developed with great efforts. He told them how the great speaker G. K. Gokhale was disconcerted while making his maiden speech, how Phirozeshah Mehta developed his powers by reciting his speeches in a room fitted with mirrors where he could watch how his expressions changed and how his hands moved. He said that Mehta took great care to see that his dress and appearance were neat and impressive. He added that Churchill, the great orator, never delivered any speech without preparation. ” ¹

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¹: Keer, P. 401.

**BECAUSE OF DIVINE LAW OF MANU OR
YAJNAVALKYA, HINDU SOCIETY WAS
NEVER ABLE TO REPAIR ITSELF**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered a speech in the Law College, Delhi University, Delhi on the 10th April 1948.

He said,

“ The responsibility for this decay lay in the failure of ancient societies to take upon themselves the task of removing the defects in their structure. Instead of removing the defects they submitted to be governed by the law laid down by the law-makers like Manu. The true function of law consists in repairing the faults in society.

Civilisation had never been a continuous process. There were states and societies which had at one time been civilized. In course of time something happened which made these societies stagnant and decayed. This could be illustrated by India's history itself.

There could be no doubt that one of the countries which could boast of a great ancient civilization was India. When inhabitants of Europe were living under almost barbaric and nomadic conditions this country had reached the highest peak of civilization. It had parliamentary institutions when people of Europe were mere nomads.

It looked to the laymen as if our parliamentary institutions today had borrowed all parliamentary procedure from European Countries, particularly from Britain, but I think anyone who refers for instance, to the pages of the *Vinay-pitaka* will find that there is no ground for such a view.

Some of the rules which are laid down in May's parliamentary practise were known to the people of India as students of *Vinay-pitaka*. People seemed to think that the procedure that there could be no debate in parliament unless there was a motion and no vote could be taken unless a motion was put, was something new. But I think this was a popular fallacy. In *Vinay-pitaka* which regulated meetings of the *Bhikkhus Sangh*, there was the well-known rule that no debate could take place except on 'Neti' motion.

We today think that secret ballot is something which was invented by the British people. That again is a mistake. In *Vinay-pitaka* there is a definite provision for tellers to count votes. They were called '*Salpatraka Grahaks*', *Salpatraka* (bark of tree) was used as ballot paper. There was also a system of secret ballot where the *Bhikkhu* himself could drop his '*Salpatraka*' in the ballot box.

I am referring to political matters because it has been said by many historians that wherever advancement they made in other branches of life the Indian people were politically very backward. I deny that proposition.

I admit that we somehow, lost that political genius. We lost all parliamentary institutions and we became subject to the autocratic king. It marked the decline of civilisation and the Indian society has been declining from time to time as all other societies have done.

Why is it that in modern times societies seem to progress continuously without many difficulties except those which wars give rise to ? Why was it not so in the ancient society ?

The difference between ancient society and modern society lies in the fact that in ancient societies law-making was not the function of the people. Law was made by God or by the law-giver. The function of the Society was merely to obey law that was made either by the divine power or the law maker. This was the fundamental reason for ancient societies not having any continuous civilisation.

The true function of law consists in repairing the faults of the society. Unfortunately ancient societies never dared to assume the function of repairing their own defects; consequently they decayed. One of the reasons for the decay of Hindu society is that it was governed by law which had either been made by *Manu* or *Yajnavalkya*. Law that has been laid down by these law-makers is divine law. The result was that Hindu society was never able to repair itself.

In Europe after a course of time, jurisdiction of ecclesiastical law was challegned by secular law with the result that today law in the West was purely secular and the jurisdiction of the Church was confined merely to the priest.

Unfortunately many writers who have carried on researches into India's past, including the great scholar Prof. Max Muller, have given currency to the motion that Indian law has not changed at all. This is in conformity with what the orthodox *pundits* maintain. But from such study as I have made I can say that it is a complete fallacy.

There is no country in the world which has undergone so many revolutions as this country. This country has been in a conflict between ecclesiastical law and secular law long before the Europeans sought to challenge the authority of the Pope. *Kautilya's Arthshastra* lays down foundation of secular law. In India unfortunately ecclesiastical law triumphed over secular law. Why did it happen ? In my opinion, it was one of the greatest disasters in this country. The unprogressive character of Hindu society was due to the notion that law cannot be changed. ”



ORGANISE UNDER ONE LEADER, ONE PARTY, ONE PROGRAMME

“Fifth Conference of united provinces of Scheduled Castes Federation was organised on 24th and 25th April 1948 at Lucknow.

Last year, an agitation was launched by Scheduled Castes Federation at the same place to establish the political rights as well as equality of human beings. In this agitation more than 2000 Dalit men and women had participated. All these were arrested at Luknow and kept in the jail. It was a very big sacrifice done by the Untouchables of United Provinces. All these men and women had intense desire to see and listen to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who was the emancipator of Dalits. The present lecture is the outcome of these efforts.

This Conference could be made successful due to effect of Shri Gayaprasad, General Secretary, Bal Govind, Kanhayyalal Sonkar, Buddhadas Choudary and Mevalal Sonkar. More than one lakh Dalits had assembled for this conference. General Secretary of All India Scheduled Castes Federation Shri P. N. Rajbhoj was also present at this Conference. Shri Gopichand Vippal President, United Provinces, Samta Sainik Dal, Shri Tilakchand Kuril President, United Provinces Scheduled Castes Federation were the main organizing pillars.

This conference was important due to two specialities. (1) It was clear from the Conference that there is no end to miseries of Untouchables in the Congress ruled States. (2) Scheduled Castes Federation would never hesitate to do anything which is necessary for the progress of Untouchables. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar addressed the Conference on Sunday, 25th April 1948.”¹

He said,

“Political power is the key to all social progress and the Scheduled Castes can achieve their salvation if they captured this power by organising themselves into a third Party and holding the balance of power between the rival political parties—Congress and Socialists.

¹ Janata, dated 1st May 1948.

The Scheduled Castes cannot capture political power by joining the Congress. It is a big organisation and if we enter the Congress, we will be a mere drop in the ocean. Congressmen have great pride and we cannot raise ourselves by joining the organisation. We will only increase the strength of our enemies by joining the Congress.

Congress is a burning house and we cannot be prosperous by entering in it. I shall not be surprised if it is ruined in a couple of years. Socialists have come out of the Congress. That will certainly weaken the Congress.

We must organise ourselves into a third party so that in case the Socialists and the Congress do not command an absolute majority, they will come to our feet to beg for our votes and we can, then, hold the balance of power and dictate our own terms to them for giving our political support.

I came to Lucknow 12 years ago as a member of the Lothian Committee. I am glad to see that there is more political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes now. We had *Satyagraha* in U. P.. I must congratulate you all for the sacrifices you have made for the Community. It shows that, if we are determined to attain our objectives, we shall attain it in spite of any obstacle.

My joining the Congress Government has created a great amount of confusion among the Scheduled Castes and I want to clear that suspicion and doubts. The British did not honour their declarations and recognised Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as the only Communities to whom power could be transferred.

I am asked why after a fight for 25 years against the Congress I choose to remain silent at that crucial juncture. After all, it is not the best strategy to fight all the time. We have also to restore to other measures.

The British left us in lurch and our Community was divided. There were many fifth columnists in our ranks. It was not in our interest to come into conflict with such a mighty organisation at that time.

We followed the policy of conciliation and have attained success to a great extent. If we did not get all what we wanted still we got a lot. We have received reservation in the legislatures and services and most of our demands have been accepted. The demand for Separate Electorate has not been conceded but we should not be ashamed of it as other minorities have also failed in this respect. That is not the time to come to a conflict with the Congress and we should get as much as we can by conciliation and cooperation.

I have joined the Central Government ; but, have not become a member of the Congress and have no intention to do so. I was invited by the Congress to join the Central Government and I had joined it unconditionally. I shall come out any time. I think it is useless to stay there. Our condition is such that it is necessary that our men should be in the administrative machinery. There is no fear of just legislation, but even good laws may be badly administered and if the Government is composed of persons who are by tradition against the interests of the Scheduled Castes, then, there can be no hope for us. *Begar* Forced Labour has no sanction of the Law, but it is being enacted by the *Zamindars* and petitions of the Scheduled Castes have been ignored because the officers who receive these petitions were in many cases relatives of the oppressors. If some Scheduled Castes members had been in office, they would have given proper protection to their brethren.

If I join the Congress, I will do so after declaring my intention. If it will be in the interest of the Scheduled Castes, I will advise you to do so. But until I openly ask you to join the Congress, do not join.

The Backward Classes had suffered because of their aloofness. They must forge a united front in order to wrest political power from the higher classes. The system of adult franchise had brought political power to the masses and in my opinion if 1 1/2 crore Scheduled Castes and one crore Backward Classes people in the U. P. join hands against a common target they could return 50% of their

members to the legislature and capture political power. I shall have no objection if the Backward Classes form a separate front against higher castes. It is deplorable that the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes are not conscious of their power with the result that higher castes were dominating the administration.

You must organise yourself under one Leader, one Party and one Programme. You remove all caste distinctions and organise yourself under the aegis of the Federation.”

Dr. Ambedkar's statement

A statement issued by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in order to clarify and amplify certain matters included in the Lucknow speech is as follows :

“ I have noticed a most distorted version of my speech delivered at the Conference of the Scheduled Castes Federation held at Lucknow on April 25 and I have also been pained to read in a local daily that I had made some ungracious remarks about my colleagues. I feel it necessary to clear the cloud and to state in outline what I said at Lucknow.

My speech was extempore, but I give below the points I made in my speech. They were all intended to meet the criticism that has been levelled against me by some of my own followers on various counts.

(1) Why I am silent ever since the departure of the Cabinet Mission ?

(2) Why I joined the Congress Government ?

(3) What I propose to do in future ?

In reply to (I) I said : The Scheduled Castes Federation demanded political safeguards—the most important of which was separate electorates. If the results of the primary elections were taken as the test, there was no doubt that the whole of the Scheduled Castes were behind this demand. Notwithstanding this, our demand was turned down by the Cabinet Mission. This was because of two reasons : (i) We were a weaker party as compared with the Muslims and the Sikhs and (ii) We were divided in our ranks which contained many fifth columnists.

The decisions of the Cabinet Mission seemed to wipe out the Scheduled Castes as a separate political entity and that without political safeguards the Scheduled Castes appeared to me to be doomed. There was complete darkness before me. That is the reason why I have not made any statement.

In reply to (2) I said :

It is true I have been an opponent and a critic of the Congress. At the same time, I do not believe in opposition for the sake of opposition. There ought to be the spirit of co-operation where we can gain something by co-operation. I thought there would be no use fighting against the Congress. I, therefore, decided to co-operate and by co-operation we got some safeguards in the Constitution which we might not otherwise have got and gave some instances to substantiate my argument.

With regard to my joining the Cabinet : I said there were two reasons which prevailed upon me to accept the offer—(i) the offer was without any condition : (ii) one could serve the interests of the Scheduled Castes better from within the Government than from without.

I said that the Scheduled Castes had no fear of bad laws being made to their prejudice. What they had to fear about was bad administration. This bad administration was due to the absence of men belonging to the Scheduled Castes in the administration.

The Administration was unsympathetic to the Scheduled Castes because it was maintained wholly by caste Hindu officers who were partial to the caste Hindus in the villages, who exacted *begar* from the Scheduled Castes, and practised upon them tyranny and oppression day in and day out. This tyranny and oppression could be averted only if more of the Scheduled Castes could find places in the civil service. This can be done better by being inside the Government rather than remaining outside.

In regard to third point, I said that there is no use joining the Congress. Safety lies in having two parties. There must be an opposition to criticise the Government. The Government may otherwise easily become dictator. It is a house which is burning. There are many inside the Congress who want to form an opposition, the necessity of which they feel quite strongly.

Secondly, the Congress itself is getting divided. The Socialists have gone out of it. How big they will grow one cannot say now. There are possibilities of their getting quite big. Hereafter, there will be two parties : (1) Congress and (2) Socialists—and the question is not whether we should join the Congress. The question is whether we should join the Congress, or the Socialists.

I said that my advice is that you should form a third party so that the Scheduled Castes may be able to hold the balance and thereby obtain bargaining power. There is no use joining any political party as its mere camp-followers. If it gives anything, it merely gives office. It cannot give power.

Your conference has just now passed a resolution condemning the Pant Government for giving you only ten per cent reservation in the services when on a purely population basis you are entitled to something like 22%. The reason why Mr. Pant does not give you your full quota, is because for his majority in the United Provinces Assembly he is not depended upon you—and that can be only when you are united into a separate organisation worthy of negotiation—you can demand 22%, and he will have to give it to you.

I then turned to the question of unity between the Scheduled Castes and the so-called Backward Classes. This I did at the request of the leaders of the Backward Classes who were present at the Conference. I said it was a pity that the two classes whose needs were commn did not join together. The reason was that the Backward Classes did not like to associate themselves with the Scheduled Castes because they were afraid that such an association will bring themselves down to the level of the Scheduled Castes.

I said that I was not anxious to establish interdining and inter-marriage between the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes. They may well remain separate social entities. There is no reason why they should not join hands to form a political party to remove their backward condition. I pointed out how the Scheduled Castes have improved their condition by playing their part in the politics of the country and there is no reason why the Backward Classes should not do the same.

I said that the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes form majority of the population of the country. There is no reason why they should not rule this country. All that is necessary is to organize for the purpose of capturing political power—which is your own because of adult suffrage. People do not seem to buck up courage because they are overwhelmed by the belief that the Congress Government is there forever. I said, this is a wrong impression. In a popular democracy no Government is permanent and not even the Government established by the two of the tallest Congressmen, Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel. If you organize, you can even capture that Government.

I am sure, the reader will notice that any suggestion made that I attacked the Congress Organization or my colleagues is a travesty of facts. ”



PROGRESS OF A COMMUNITY ALWAYS DEPENDS UPON EDUCATION

At Manmad, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was presented with a purse on January 15, 1949*. “ Speaking on the occasion, he declared,

that his people would establish real socialism in the land under the rule of peasants and workers. He also impressed upon his audience that the progress of a community always depended upon how they advanced in education.”¹

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* As per Janata, dated 22nd January 1949, the programme was held on Sunday the 16th January 1949—Editors.

¹: Keer, P. 410.

THE HINDU CODE WAS A RIGHT STEP TOWARDS A CIVIL CODE

Students Parliament of Siddarth College had organised a Student Parliament on Wednesday, 11th January 1950. Coinciding the presence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Bombay. He was called specially to talk on 'Hindu Code Bill.' The programme was arranged in Sundarabai Hall. Eventhough the programme was at 9 a. m. the hall was full to its capacity by 8 a. m. only. Many outside dignitaries were present to listen to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. A special arrangement of loud speakers was made.¹

In his speech Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said,

" It would be wrong to describe the Hindu Code Bill as either radical revolutionary. He said that the Bill, while according sanction to the new ways of progress, did not oppose the orthodox practices. He further stated that the new Republican Constitution of India had given a positive direction that Government should endeavour to prepare a Civil Code for the benefit of the country as a whole. The purpose of the Hindu Code Bill was, he explained, to codify and modify certain branches of the Hindu Law. Dwelling upon its significance, he said that it was beneficial from the point of the country's oneness that the same set of laws should govern the Hindu social and religious life. He further told his audience that the Hindu laws were being revised not because the Hindus were a weak people to resist its revival but for uniformity's sake. The Hindu Code was a right step towards a Civil Code. The laws should be easily understandable and be applied to all society irrespective of regional barriers. Moreover, a Hindu was free to adopt anybody from the Hindu society and he could make a will denying inheritance to his daughter.

As regards the authority under which the Code was drafted, he said that the modifications proposed were based on the Hindu *Shastras* and *Smritis*. The property was governed by *Dayabhag* system ; the child belonged to the caste of the father under *Pitrisavarnya* ; divorce was supported by *Kautilya* and *Parashara Smriti* ; and women's rights to property were supported by *Brihaspati Smriti*," he concluded."²

¹ : Janata, dated 14th January 1950.

² : Keer, Pp. 417—418.

WE SHOULD ENSURE THAT INDIA IS NOT ENSLAVED AGAIN

“Tremendous mass enthusiasm marked a meeting of the Bombay Scheduled Castes Federation at Nare Park, Parel, on Wednesday evening, the 11th January 1950, when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the moving spirit behind the drafting of the Indian Union Constitution, was presented with a book-shaped gold casket containing a copy of the monumental document.

The meeting, attended by over two lakhs* men, women and children, was a landmark in the history of the Scheduled Castes' Federation. The serried ranks of humanity that overflowed from the Park to the main road was the biggest gathering ever seen.

Large processions of Harijans, carrying blue party flags and vociferously shouting victory slogans, converged on the Park from many localities early in the after-noon. The crowd was conducted by volunteers and remarkable discipline was maintained. Enthusiasm reached fever pitch when Dr. Ambedkar climbed the dais to attend his first public reception in the city in five years and shouts of “*Ambedkar Ki Jai*” rent the air. About 50 garlands covered the Law Member who was later joined by his wife Dr. Savita Ambedkar. The assemblage gave a rousing ovation to her also.

The large-seized casket was paid for by subscriptions raised by the Federation. Two thousand rupees, which were left over after meeting the cost of the casket, were also presented to Dr. Ambedkar by Mr. J. G. Bhatankar, the Federation's Secretary.

Speaking immediately after receiving the gift, Dr. Ambedkar referred extensively to the past. He said,

“Because we had been fighting the Congress in all elections, Congressmen were so much against me that some of them openly said they would see any one in the Constituent Assembly but not me. Indeed, because our party's strength here was not sufficient, I had to seek election to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal.

*. Janata, dated 14th January 1950

“ The fact that I not only entered the Assembly but was actually entrusted later with the unique honour of drafting the Constitution. I consider not so much a tribute to myself as to the party. We were called stooges of the British and Muslims ; but we had to bargain with the former because we were not free and were compelled to safeguard our own interests.”¹

“ He further stated that he had entered the Constituent Assembly with the object of safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Castes and not with the ambition of drafting the Constitution. However, through some circumstances the responsibility for drafting the Constitution fell on his shoulders, and he was proud that his name had been associated with the framers of the Constitution, because one got such a unique opportunity once in one's lifetime.”²

“ Talking in a more personal way, Dr. Ambedkar declared, “ Some people think that because I am in the capital I am losing touch with the Federation and that the ground is shifting from beneath my feet. But today's gathering shows that I am on firmer ground than even before.

The Law Member, who kept up his serious demeanour throughout the impressive ceremony, recalled the bitter past between himself and the Congress but made a powerful appeal to the Harijans not to isolate themselves from other political groups but seek their co-operation for the good of the community.

“ The political situation is not clear at the moment ” he declared, “ and it is too early to say with which party we will ally ourselves.” Speaking in a strain that sounded strange compared with pre-independence utterances. Dr. Ambedkar exhorted his community to think not merely of itself but also of the country as a whole. “ India was enslaved by the Muslims and the British but today we are free and we should exert ourselves to ensure that history does not repeat itself,” he added.

“ Though we were at logger-heads for a long time with the Congress, the present Government have done something at least for the Scheduled Castes. In a democracy no minority can achieve

¹ : Source material, Vol. I, Pp. 358-360.

² : Keer, P. 418.

much by itself. We are a minority, and will continue to be a minority, and, therefore, it is necessary to seek the co-operation of some parties."

Dr. Ambedkar then came to the subject of elections. "We are a poor Community and we do not have large sums to spend on elections. So, I suggest that every adult contribute four annas per month to swell the party's election funds. We must start on this task at once so that we may have collected enough before the elections".

For hours after the meeting ended Harijans in Central and North Bombay, returning to their homes kept the streets lively with peaceful but noisy pro— Dr. Ambedkar demonstrations."¹

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, on the subject which were reported by 'the Bombay Chronicle'. The dimensions were :

"The Law Minister said that his election as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee was a unique honour not only to himself, but a recognition of the Federation as a political force to be reckoned with.

In the past, they had to fight against formidable odds and there were many who dubbed him as a stooges of the British and Muslim League. Throughout the last 20 years, the Congress was at logger-heads with the Federation and they were determined to see that no representative of the Federation got a seat in the Constituent Assembly.

He never dreamt that he would be charged with the responsibility of framing the country's Constitution. Now the opponents have realised that the Federation was a political force which could not be slighted or ignored.

Dr. Ambedkar said that, hitherto, the Federation had followed a narrow path, namely putting their own interests about those of the country, and he admitted he was partly responsible for it. Now that India has achieved independence, the time has come to change their attitude, and strive for the national good, while, of course, safeguarding their own interests, he observed.

¹ Source material, Vol. I, Pp. 360.

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¹. Source material, Vol. I, Pp. 360.

During the British regime, he added, the Federation followed its own policy, keeping aloof from other political parties. "We are after all a minority and a minority cannot be successful in the elections without the support of a more powerful political party". He said that their organization, therefore, would have to seek the support of some other party during the next elections. Dr. Ambedkar made a fervent appeal to the audience to contribute to the election funds liberally."¹



¹ : The Bombay Chronicle, dated 12th January 1950.

MAHARASHTRIANS ARE MORE SINCERE, MORE DUTY CONSCIOUS TO THE NATION

Republic day was celebrated ¹ with much fun and fare at the new Maharashtra Bhavan. Maharashtrian Institutions of New Delhi on 27th January 1950. Various programme were arranged on this occassion. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was specially invited and honoured on this occasion Mr. Kakasaheb Gadgil welcomed Dr. Babasaheb and Mrs. Ambedkar. Replying to the address,

He said,

“ The Maharashtrians were more sincere, more conscious of their duties to the nation and were ever willing to sacrifice for the cause of the nation. He was proud that two Maharashtrians were in the Central Cabinet and the Governor of the Reserve Bank, too, was a Maharashtrian. In politics, in learning and in the cause of sacrifice, Maharashtrians were far ahead,” he concluded.²

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¹ : Janata, dated 4th February 1950.

² : Keer, P. 419.

RELIGION NO LONGER BE INHERITED BUT BE EXAMINED RATIONALLY BY EVERYBODY

“A Dramatic development of great national importance and interest throughout South-East Asia took place in the capital New Delhi; tonight, the May 2, 1950 when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, India's Law Minister, called upon 70 million Harijans to embrace *Buddhism*, speaking at the triple anniversary of Lord Buddha at a crowded meeting.

Later, Dr. Ambedkar told the “*Bharat*” representative that he was on his way to embracing *Buddhism*. Mrs. Ambedkar was present at the meeting.

It is also authoritatively learnt that about 15 Harijans will embrace *Buddhism* in Delhi tomorrow. Similar directives, it is learnt, have been sent to Dr. Ambedkar's followers all over India.

Yesterday, the actual day of Trinity-birthday, “*Parinirvana*” day, the day of death of Lord Buddha, Dr. Ambedkar went to the local *Vihar* to pay his respects and homage to Lord Buddha.

According to a high *Buddhist Bikkhu*, Dr. Ambedkar prayed for
Buddham Saranam gacchami

Dhammam Saranam gacchami

Sangham Saranam gacchami

He also accepted five tenets of *Buddhism*, all generally interpreted as near solemnisation.

Buddhist Renaissance

A ranking *Buddhist Bikkhu* who was present while Dr. Ambedkar was making his speech, said that now India had attained freedom. *Buddhism* must come to its own. Emphasising the political significance of the possible *Buddhist* renaissance in India, he declared that India would require *Buddhism* to guard her freedom and spiritual strength.

Dr. Ambedkar, in his 30 minutes speech in flawless Hindi, emphatically asserted that *Buddhist* renaissance had again commenced in India. He supported this assertion by pointing out that the President of the Republic had to approach *Buddhism* for the symbol over free India's national flag *Ashoka Chakra*, finding nothing from a search into *Brahminism*. *Buddhism* again came

forward to furnish to the Republic her emblem of the three lions, and when the first President of the Republic was being sworn in, at that history making occasion, idol not of any of the countless Hindu Gods or Goddesses but of the Lord Buddha was installed to record the event, added Dr. Ambedkar.

Neither Rama, nor Krishna, infact no *God* matched the Lord Buddha, he said. No greater seer and leader would be born, Dr. Ambedkar declared.

Dr. Ambedkar recalled several instances from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* and questioned the greatness of Ramachandra and Lord Krishna who were "alleged to have behaved that way." He said *Hinduism* propounded the twin theory of one truth and one's love for one's own as bigotry which shirked disputes and sought to maintain preponderance of its following intact.

He accused *Brahmins* of having securedly held all the rights except that of Crown which incidentally took the wearer to hell according to *Hindu shastra*. He asked, how could that religion be loved by those tens of millions on whom perpetual condemnation was perpetrated ?

Time had arrived, he declared, when religion should no longer be inherited from father to son like goods and chattels, but should be examined rationally by everybody before personal acceptance.

Dr. Ambedkar made it clear that he did not believe as Socialists and Communists did, that religion was unnecessary. He stated categorically, "I believe that religion is necessary for the mankind. When religion ends the society would perish too. After all no Government can safeguard and discipline mankind as *niti* or *dharma* can", Dr. Ambedkar added.

Burma's Ambassador, Sir Maung Gyee, who presided over the meeting, stated that the world which was in pain and trouble would find peace, and solace in *Buddhism*. An official of the *Mahabodhi* Society declared the Society's rejoicing over the fact that "Dr. Ambedkar has joined our ranks".

"Dr. Ambedkar is arriving in Bombay tomorrow".¹

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¹ : The Bharat, dated 3rd May 1950.

NON-BELIEVERS SHOULD BE CONVERTED TO THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH

The Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists was held at Candy (Ceylon) from 25th May to 6th June 1950. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar attended the Conference.

On 26th May 1950 the representatives of 27 countries came together in the 'Temple of the Truth' to discuss the subject of Revival of Buddhism. The resolution regarding brotherhood in the world was passed in the Conference.

Thereafter Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the Conference.¹

Dr. Ambedkar in his speech said,

" I am an interested observer, not a delegate. I came here with some very serious purposes. You probably know that there are people in India who thought the time had come when an effort might be made to revive Buddhism in India. I am one of them. The definite objects of my visit are first, to see Buddhist Ceremonial. Ceremonial is an important part of religion. Whatever rationalists might say, ceremonial is a very essential thing in religion. By coming here I thought I would be able to see the ritual that formed part and parcel of Buddhism.

Secondly, I wish to find out to what extent the religion of the Buddha is observed here in its pristine purity and to what extent His Gospel is encrusted by superstition, with beliefs incongruous with Buddhism and Buddha's doctrines.

My third objective is to find out to what extent the Order of Bhikkhus as established by Buddha has been of service to the community and whether that Order is merely engaged in maintaining what is called "purity of life" for itself, or whether it is engaged in serving the laity, advising and making it perfect in the way the Buddha wished it to be. I am interested in finding out to what extent the religion of Buddha is a living

¹ : Dalit Bandhu, dated 28th May 1950.

force or whether it is something which exists by reason of the fact that the people of this country happen to be Buddhists in the traditional sense of the word and having inherited it merely passed it from one generation to another, whether there was the dynamics of religion so far as the country is concerned. The best way I could find out if religion is static or that it has momentum and is dynamic is to study and observe the interest the younger generation of the country displayed, to what extent they devoted their time to religion, to what extent their belief in religion was giving them salvation (not in the theological sense of salvation after death, but in the life of the world). Buddhist countries should have not merely fellowship, but promote religion and make sacrifices. Merely to send *Bhikkhus* to lecture on the Message of the Buddha does not make people accept His way of Life.

If the peace of the world is to be assured, it is not by mere lecturing. Those who do not believe in the virtue of the Path should be persuaded to accept it, and it is obvious that countries where Buddhism exists should make sacrifices, establish missions and find funds, so that they can carry on the work of not merely spreading the gospel, but of converting men and women to the Eight-Fold Path.”¹



¹ : Report of the Ceylon Conference and Proceedings of the First Session of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held from 25th May to the 6th June 1950 (B. E. 2494)

BUDDHISM PAVED WAY FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISTIC PATTERN OF SOCIETY

The Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists was held in Ceylon from 25th May to 6th June 1950. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar attended the Conference.

Addressing an International gathering at Colombo, on June 6th, 1950, Dr. Ambedkar said,

“Most people who have studied rise and fall of Buddhism in India would admit that this subject had not been adequately dealt with as it should have been. I have not been able to find any authentic material explaining why Buddhism rose to the height it achieved and why it disappeared in India.

To know a subject thoroughly, one must know its relevant traditions exactly and precisely. Similarly, the significance of Buddhism would not be understood unless the exact circumstances which gave birth to it are understood. I disagree with the view that Hinduism has all along been the religion of India. Hinduism is the latest development of social thought in India:

The religion of India has undergone three changes. Vedic religion which was practised first gave way, in course of time, to Brahmanism and this in turn to Hinduism. It was during Brahminic period that Buddhism was born. This was because Buddhism opposed inequality, authority and division of society into various classes which Brahminism had introduced in India.

It is easy to practise the Vedic religion. In it, performance of *yagya* (*yajnas*) is the main *puja*. The Vedic Aryans used to worship innumerable Gods. They used to please them by performing *yagyas*. The *puja* to be performed for these Gods should necessarily be sacred and superb. In those Agrarian times, cows were the chief wealth of the Aryans. Therefore, they used to sacrifice cows to honour their deities. In this way, Vedic Dharma encouraged violence. Brahmins succeeded in organising the society only by adopting *Vedic yagyas*. The Brahmins also

divided the society into four sections (Varnas)—*Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra*. The division of the society into four varnas (Castes) created great inequalities. They said that the Brahmins were born of the *Brahma's* mouth and *Shudras* from his feet. Can anybody believe that the basic principle of any religion could be to divide the society? Yet, this is what *Brahminism* has perpetuated. On the other hand, equality is the main feature of Buddhism. The religion of the Buddha gives freedom of thought and freedom of self-development to all. To abjure violence is another essential teaching of Buddhism. It has never taught to achieve salvation by sacrificing animals or any living being to propitiate Gods. I would say that the rise of Buddhism in India was as significant as the French Revolution. Prior to the advent of Buddhism, it was impossible to even think that a *Shudra* would get throne. History of India reveals that after the emergence of Buddhism, *Shudras* are seen getting thrones. Verily, Buddhism paved way for establishment of democracy and socialistic pattern of society in India.

It is a perplexing problem how Buddhism, which had acquired a highest place, disappeared from India. There is very little material to tell us about the condition of Buddhism upto 274 B. C. It is, however, seen that Buddhism was at its climax of popularity in the reign of Asoka. How such a great and popular religion lost ground in India is a painful phenomena.

Buddhism appears to have met strong opposition in 185 B. C. when the last Mauryan King was assassinated by his Chief Commander. This was one of the lawful actions of the Brahmins to save their religion. But it is a pity that the historians have not given sufficient importance to this incident. While going through the Buddhist literature, I find that 90 % followers of the Buddha were Brahmins. Brahmins used to come to the Buddha for discussion and argumentation, and when defeated, used to become faithful to the Buddha and ultimately accepted Buddhism. The Buddhist literature is full of such incidents. Therefore, how is it that Buddhism that had flourished amongst the majority of Brahmins was later on destroyed by the Brahmins themselves.

In my opinion the main reason for this was the family deity's (*kula deva*) worship. In India like the village deity and national deity, there were family deities also who were worshipped through the Brahmins. The priests who used to go for worshipping these deities started influencing the affairs of the State through the queens. Asoka after embracing Buddhism discontinued this practice and removed the idols of such deities. Asoka said, "As I venerate the Buddha, the Enlightened One, there is no need to worship any other deity." This action of Asoka disturbed the Brahmins very much as it ended their unfair means of livelihood and exploitation. They pledged to take revenge for this loss.

The Brahmins were of the view that after death, kings go to hell because of their errors and omissions. Therefore, they did not agree to be rulers but preferred to be the Chief Advisers to the Kings. In order to take revenge for the loss they suffered on account of stoppage of *Kulapuja* (family deity's worship). Brahmins gave up the approved motto of being advisers only and tried to grab power. With the help of their well-wisher *Kshatriyas*, they also organised an united Brahmin-Kshatriya axis against Buddhism. The ascendancy of Brahminism again in Indian society, is one of the reasons for the downfall of Buddhism.

The foreign invasions are also responsible for the decline of Buddhism in India. The Greeks did no harm to Buddhism. There are positive proofs available that the Greeks gave liberal financial assistance for Buddhist activities. The Huns invaded India, and after being defeated by the Guptas, they settled in India. Prior to this, the Huns tried to destroy Buddhism. The religion of the Buddha got the severest blow from the Muslim invasion. They destroyed the Buddhist idols and killed the *Bhikkhus*. They mistook the great Nalanda University as the Fort of Buddhists and killed a large number of monks thinking that they were soldiers. The few *Bhikkhus* who escaped an onslaught fled away to the neighbouring countries like Nepal, Tibet, and China.

Some of my Hindu friends often ask why Hinduism, which has also idol-worship, survived in India and Buddhism died.

My answer is that whatever the religion may be, it requires the priest community to preserve it. Due to the shortage of Buddhist monks, Buddhism declined. Efforts were subsequently made by some Buddhists to raise another priest-hood in order to revive Buddhism but their efforts failed. Such is not case with Hinduism. A Brahmin's son is priest by birth. Therefore, no separate priest community is required to protect their religion. This is why Hinduism survived Muslim onslaught. Moreover, Buddhism as a religion is difficult to practise while Hinduism is not. Besides, the political climate in India had also been inhospitable to its advancement.

I do not agree with the suggestion made by many people in India that Buddhism was destroyed by the dialectics of Shankaracharya. This is contrary to the facts as Buddhism existed for many centuries after his death. In my opinion, Shankaracharya himself was a Buddhist. His Guru too was Buddhist. Of course, Buddhism declined in India because of the rise of *Vaishnavism* and *Saivism*, the two cults which adopted and absorbed many good points of Buddhism. Today, Hinduism is in a very much changed form. Hinduism which taught and practised violence earlier has started teaching non-violence. This has been copied from Buddhism. Buddhism may have disappeared, in material form but as a spiritual force it still exists in India.”¹



¹ *Bauddha Dharam hi Manav Dharam* (Hindi)—Speech in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 6-6-1950.

Reprinted : Dr. Ambedkar on Buddhism : Editor D. C. Ahir, Pp 111—114.

I SHALL DEVOTE REST OF MY LIFE TO THE REVIVAL AND SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Law Minister, Government of India, has appealed to people to embrace Buddhism.

“ The present Hinduism was the same about a thousand years ago ”, he said and added : it was nothing but Buddhism, but after the Mahomedan invasion and other causes it lost its purity and was mixed up with dross.”

Dr. Ambedkar, who was speaking at Bombay's Buddha Temple at Worli on Friday night the 29th September 1950 deprecated the idea that political independence would end all the ills of the country. He said, “ as long as there is no purity of mind, wrong doing and utter disregard of morals would continue in every day life; and as long as man does not know how to behave with man and creates barriers between man and man, India can never be prosperous”.

“ To end all these troubles, India must embrace Buddhism. Buddhism is the only religion based upon ethical principles and teaches how to work for the good and well-being of the common man. ”

Dr. Ambedkar declared that he would devote the rest of his life to the revival and spread of Buddhism in India.”¹



THE BILL WAS AIMED AT THE SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

On December 26, 1950, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while addressing a rally of 50,000 people under the auspices of the Belgaum District branch of the Scheduled Castes Federation stated,

The lack of moral courage and strength of character of the women in India had come in the way of the Bill (Hindu Code) that had been drafted by him. None of the prominent women leaders were really interested in the social progress of our women, Dr. Ambedkar declared.

Dr. Ambedkar said, "I drafted the Bill in confirmity with the dictates of the *Smritis* which allow several rights to women. The Bill was only aimed at removing the obstruction of Law in the social advancement of women. On wealth depends independence and a woman must be very particular to retain her wealth and rights, to help retain her freedom.

Dr. Ambedkar compared the Hindu Code Bill to milk which has been spoiled by mixture with a bitter acid. Referring to agitations by some orthodox people and even women for whose benefit the Bill had been introduced, he remarked, "I challenge everyone to show me whether any of the Sections in the Bill are not based on the dictates of the *Smritis*."



THE SCHEDULED CASTES SHOULD GIVE UP POLITICAL ALOOFNESS

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered speech at Bombay on 12th June, 1951.

“ The Scheduled Castes should give up their political aloofness and co-operate with other communities in strengthening our newly won freedom. But in such co-operation the separate entity of the Scheduled Castes Federation should be maintained. You must change your policies radically towards the Congress. Up to this time our relations with the Congress had been one of opposition. On the political field we were enemies of each other. So far, we were rather narrow minded in our outlook, the only interest before us being that of our Community. Now that we have achieved our freedom, we should change our outlook entirely and co-operate with others, keeping in view the interest of our Community and help consolidate our newly won freedom.

It is wrong to say that the foundation of the Federation was last collapsing. As a matter of fact we gained strength and we stand solidly united. The Federation had a very bad defeat at the polls in 1946. I found that it was essential for a few of us to get into the Constituent Assembly to safeguard the interest of the Community. All the doors and windows were then closed to us. I was not sure of my self but stood for election from Bengal. I won the seat.

At that time, I had not the least idea that I would do some thing for the nation as a whole. The responsibility of framing a Constitution for the country was placed on my shoulders. I feel now that it was the golden opportunity for myself and community. By framing this Constitution, I convinced the Hindus, who were abusing me and my party, for the last 20 years as anti-nationalist, that they were entirely wrong. We are as staunch a nationalist organisation as any other.

The time has now changed and we were different from that of Hindu domination, when we were not sure of our future. Our ultimate goal now should be to consolidate our newly won freedom.

The Federation should give up its aloofness. Ours is a small Community and if we have to maintain our *status quo* we must co-operate with some political party in the coming Election.

This question will, however, be decided at the time of Elections in the light of the political situation then prevailing in the country."



I AM LIKE A ROCK WHICH DOES NOT MELT BUT TURNS THE COURSE OF RIVERS

Dr. Ambedkar's speech at Pāmdaspur, Jullundar, Punjab on 27th October 1951, during Election Campaign.

He said,

"Dear brothers and sisters !

I had an idea to tour the Punjab before, but I could not come here and I have come to know that many people were collected in Jullundur and were disappointed to find that I had not come here. I hope you will excuse me for this inconvenience caused to you all. My inability to come here although caused much inconvenience to so many people, but, I was helpless and it was all due to the following reasons. Firstly, during my four years in the Congress Government, I had been overburdened with official work and could not find time to come here. Secondly, I was also not keeping good health during all those years and still I am not quite well. Thirdly, the Achhuts of the whole of India wish that I should tour the whole of India and speak to them. You can well understand that our country is such a big continent that it is not possible for a single man to tour the whole country even in two years. So I could not fulfil people's desire and could not come here when they wanted me. Therefore, I want that all our people should stand on their own legs and be united so that they may be able to weather away the storm without my assistance and not to press upon me too much.

A man should leave politics after the age of 55 years, because even Government gives notice to a Government servant after the age of 55 that he is unfit for service now and he should retire. But the politicians of the present age start their politics after the age of 55 years so that they may be able to earn their livelihood; does not matter whether they are able to serve the country or not. They have only one point in mind and that is to get something out of it for their own self. I have no selfish motives. I am not continuing in the politics simply for my own good ; but I am doing so for the sake of my community. I jumped

into politics in 1920 and since then I have taken part in politics and upto this time, I have spent thirty long years of my life in serving my community. Although I want to leave politics, but I have been compelled to remain in politics thinking the necessity of organising my community. Out of these thirty years, eight years I was Member of the Government. I do not know if there is any politician who has been in politics continuously for such long time. I remained in the Government for eight years and had I wished I could have remained for ever there. I am not proud of it but I know that with my qualifications at my back, nobody had power to expell me if I simply wanted to remain there. But the cause of my community necessitated my resignation from the membership of the Congress Government. I may assure you that I have always kept the well-being of my community in mind wherever I go.

When I came from England after getting my degree in Doctor of Philosophy, there was nobody in India with such qualifications. So when I reached Bombay and settled in the Mohalla from where I had gone, the Bombay Government after a great difficulty found my place, as nobody knew where I was residing, it was such an unpopular place, and approached me to accept the post of Professor of Political Economy. I refused the offer. If I had accepted that job, I would have been at least the Director of Public Instructions. I would have got three or four thousands of rupees per month. I refused the post because I had a great feeling for the service of my community which I could not have done remaining in that service. A Government servant, you know, cannot serve his community as he has to go according to the wishes of the Government and follow the policy of the Government.

After earning some money for two-three years, I again went to England for further studies and came back as a Barrister. When I returned to Bombay, I was again asked by Bombay Government to accept the post of a District Judge. I was offered Rs. 2,000 per month and promised that I will be a High Court Judge after some time. But I did not accept that also. My income although, from the other source at that time was only Rs. 200.

In 1942, I had to face two questions. One was to serve as a High Court Judge and the other was to join the Government of India as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Had I joined the High Court, I would have received Rs. 5,000 per mensem as pay and Rs. 1,000 as pension after retirement but I did not do that. I entered politics. I got birth in *Achhut* community and will die for my community and the cause of my community is supreme to me. I did not join any party or body. I remained independent. While in the Congress Government, I remained true to my people. Many people thought that I had joined the Congress party as I had accepted the Cabinet Ministership of the Congress Government. The critics pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar had joined Congress and why the Scheduled Castes people should continue to remain in the Scheduled Castes Federation. I explained about it at Lucknow that earth and stone are two different things and they can never mix together. Stone will remain the stone and the earth will remain the earth. I am like a rock (stone) which does not melt but turns the course of rivers. Wherever I may be, in whatever company I may find myself, I would never lose my separate identity. If anybody asks my co-operation, I would gladly give it for a worthy cause. I co-operate with the Congress Government for four years with all my might, and with the sincerity in the service of my mother-land. But during all these years I did not allow myself to merge into the Congress organisation.

We want to join that party which we think has sympathy with the Scheduled Caste people and which will take pains to redress the grievances of our people as we are taking. But there is not a single party which has sympathy with our people, all are selfish.

I have come here in connection with the elections. I may tell you that unless you are united you will not be successful. To be successful, one must be either powerful or rich. One of these is essential for our success. We have neither any money nor we are in majority. Marwadi and Baniyas do not have power but they have money. So they can purchase anything with that. They can purchase the police, as well as the Courts. Our people have

neither power nor money. Our people are in minority in the villages and they have always to live at the mercy of the Caste Hindus and other high caste people. Our people are put to all sorts of hardships and when they complain to police authorities, they are not heard. They are even abused when they complain. Under such circumstances, if we have achieved any thing, it is only some political rights. If we unite under the banner of the Scheduled Castes Federation, we can realise those rights and pull our community out of chaos.

But we can have one power and that is the political power. This power we must win. Armed with this power, we can protect the interest of our people.

Are you assured of this power in the freedom this country has gained ? We were never against our country getting independence. But we wanted a straight answer to only one question. What will be our fate in free India ? I posed that question before Gandhiji and other Congress leaders. Only one question is that what will be the position of our people in Swaraj ? Whether we will remain the same Bhangis and Chamars as we are today; whether our children will not be admitted to the schools in the same way as it being done now; and our people will have to suffer as they are suffering now in the villages ? What will happen to our people? At the Round Table Conference, this question was again raised whether we want *Swaraj* or not, I asked Gandhi who was the sponsor of this move, the same question that what will he do for the poor people if India got *Swaraj*. Whether we will be given safeguards as are proposed to be provided for Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Anglo-Indians. But when the Scheduled Castes people were given separate rights in 1932, Gandhi started fast unto death until this provision of Separate Electorates for the Scheduled Castes was repealed. At that time, an agreement was reached between us but what is happening today is quite different to what was agreed to. He promised at that time that no candidates on Congress tickets will be put against those of the Scheduled Castes Federation. We want to send our people for the reserved seats but Congress Party is interfering with it. They are trying to put people for our

reserved seats who are fools and have selfish motives, who will be yesmen of the Congress. When any Brahmin or Baniya ask for the ticket of the Congress, he is asked one question. They want to know how many times he had gone to jail. I want to ask the Congress, why they do not ask the same question from Scheduled Castes people, who seek Congress ticket? And why only illiterate and unpopular people are selected by them.

There were 30 Scheduled Caste people in the Parliament. I ask them what have they done there. They never asked any question, they never moved any resolution and they never submitted a bill for consideration in the Parliament. If anybody comes from outside and sees that 30 Members of Parliament have not put up any grievance, he will think that our people are at right and do not require any special consideration. That is why we want to send our true representative who will put our grievances before the Assemblies secure redress.

From the very first election, we have been fighting against the Congress because it is unnecessarily interfering with our rights. Just see the leader of the Congress Party, Pandit Nehru. He has delivered two thousand speeches during the last 20 years, but he has never spoken about the welfare of the Scheduled Castes even once. From this you can judge what sympathy the Congress party can have for our people when its leader is so much adamant. Pandit Nehru is always for the Muslims. I do not want that Muslims should be neglected but I do want that Muslims should not enjoy at the expense of the other communities who need more protection. I heard that some people went to Pandit Nehru and requested that something should be done for the Scheduled Castes. But Pandit Nehru told them that everything has been done for them and they do not require anything special now. At the time of Partition, when our people were asked by the Pakistan authorities to remain in Pakistan so that they may not have to do the menial duties themselves, I asked Pandit Nehru to do something for the evacuation of the poor Scheduled Castes. Pandit Nehru did not do anything. I sent two persons to Pakistan for the evacuation of our people and our Mahar Battalion was also sent there for protection of the poor Scheduled Castes. If Congress Leader has so much sympathy for our people, what Congress will do for us ?

There are 21 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes in the Punjab Assembly out of 120 seats and three reserved in the Union Parliament. I want to ask one question from all those parties which want to put candidates of their choice to these reserved seats and to show sympathy with the Scheduled Castes why they put the candidates against the reserved seats only and why they do not put those candidates to general seats ? If they are sincere, let them provide general seats for our people. All these parties want to take away from us what we have achieved after great hardships.

I want to tell you that without political power we cannot exist in this world. We have secured reservation of seats in the Provincial Assemblies and the Union Parliament but this is only for 10 years and nobody can say what will happen after 10 years. If our true representatives are not sent to Assemblies and Parliament, all our efforts will be in vain but if they are sent something will come out of it. Otherwise, we cannot have voice in the Government and local bodies.

The map of politics has changed in India now. First, Congress was fighting for *Swaraj* and that is why all the people joined it. And those who opposed the Congress were supposed to be anti-nationalist. But, now the condition has changed. See the Congress *Pahalwans* of Punjab. There was a time when Bhargava and Sachar were like brothers. They promised to be peaceful with each other. But, now they are the worst enemies. The last date for the filing of papers is 5th November and today is 27th October, but the list of Congress candidates has not so far been sent from Punjab. Both of these people are anxious to become Prime Ministers. The same thing is happening in Bihar. I am surprised to see that Congress Party which was so powerful at the time of partition, has so weakened in such a short period. Today, the man with Gandhi cap is not considered a gentleman. People say either Congress man or gentleman. Nobody can be both. Such is the position of Congress now. Congress has become old now and it is not able to fight with others and will die its natural death.

If you vote for the Scheduled Castes Federation, then I assure you that our candidates will be successful in the coming general elections. There is no doubt about it, the only thing is that you should vote for our true representatives. On the day of voting all men and women should leave their business and go to polls.

The reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes is for 10 years only. I wanted that this reservation should remain for such time as Untouchability is there, but the Congress leader, late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel opposed me. So the other persons who were there in the Committee also had to support Sardar because they belonged to his party. Therefore, we should try to send our true representatives to the Assemblies, so that they may safeguard our right and also try to secure this reservation after 10 years. The people who are trying to secure tickets from other parties forget that after 10 years, they will be nowhere. No other party will come to them to say that they would stand on their tickets. Today, other parties are only anxious to secure our votes and capture our seats and not that they are sympathising with us.

When the time came for the award of different symbols to different parties, our party, the Scheduled Castes Federation was also considered as an All India Party. Other parties gave their symbols as Oxen, Horses, Donkies etc., but for your convenience I made our symbol, the "*Elephant*" so that people may not find difficulty in recognising our party candidates. Elephant can be easily distinguished from other animals.

This time the cumulative voting system has been replaced with distributive system. Where there are reserved seats, the voters of that constituency can cast two votes, one to a candidate standing on reserved seat and the other to a candidate who is standing on general seat. We cannot cast two votes to one man. So we will have to make alliance with some party, whose voters will cast their second vote in our favour. The party with whom we enter into agreement will be declared in a few days and you must vote for that party and in return that party will support our candidates. In this way, our candidates will be successful. Our voting strength is not so strong and moreover there are joint electorate which makes our position more awkward. So we will have to make alliance with one party or the other.

At the end, I want to inform you that there is only one party which can do something for the Scheduled Castes and that is the Scheduled Castes Federation. I have built the house for you and it is for upto you to maintain it in proper order. I have planted the tree, if you water it, you will enjoy the fruits and you will be able to enjoy its shade, if not, you will have to sit in the sun. Our community will be ruined. So every Scheduled Caste should come under the banner of the Scheduled Castes Federation and make it more powerful. Only if we unite, we can achieve something. United we stand and divided we fall.



FAILURE OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY WILL RESULT IN REBELLION, ANARCHY AND COMMUNISM

In this speech, delivered before the students' Parliament of the D. A. V. College, Jullundar City (Punjab) on October 28, 1951. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar lucidly explains the Parliamentary Democracy.

He said,

“ Principal, the Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Speaker,

I am, indeed, thankful to you for the great honour done to me of asking me to address the special session of your Parliament. During my whole life, I have been, so to say, a wanderer, from subject to subject, from profession to profession. I began my career as a Professor of Political Economics in the Government Commerce College, Bombay, in 1919, after my return from England. But I soon felt that the Government service was no good for a man who wishes to do public service. A government servant is bound by rules of discipline. He is hampered at every stage in his work of public service. I then went back to England and qualified for Bar. After my return I practised for a short period and then accepted the post of the Principal of the Government Law College at Bombay. I came back to the profession of teaching. I worked as the Principal of the Law College for five years. Then, the 1935 Government of India Act came into being, which brought the popular legislatures in existence for the first time. I then thought of taking a jump into the politics and I left the service and took to politics. Since then I have alternatively been doing legal practice and serving the public. Legal practice and public service are, thus, the alternating currents in my life ; and I do not know on which current my life will end whether A.C. or D.C.

I am very fond of teaching profession. I am also very fond of students. I have dealt with them. I have lectured them in my life. This is the first opportunity I have got to address the students since my resignation from the Cabinet. I am very glad to talk to the students. A great lot of the future of this country must necessarily depend on the students of this country. Students is an intelligent part of the

community and they can shape the public opinion. I, therefore, take special pleasure in addressing you, the members of the Parliament, and I am really thankful for this opportunity given to me.

When your Principal wrote to me requesting me to address you, he did not indicate any particular subject. I also had nothing in my mind about the topic on which I shall speak to you this morning. But suddenly, as it usually happens in my case, at the flash of moment the subject became clear to me, and I have decided to speak a few words with you on the subject of Parliamentary Government. The time at my disposal is very short and I will, therefore, be able to give only a brief analysis of the subject.

During the discussion in the Constituent Assembly there was a variety of opinion as regards the nature of the Constitution that we should have. Some preferred British system ; some American system. There were others who did not want either of these two types of Government. But after a long discussion, a large majority of members came to a conclusion that the system of the Parliamentary Government as it is in Britain is best suited to our country.

There are some sections of people who do not like Parliamentary Government. Communists want the Russian type of Government. The Socialists are also against the present Constitution of India. They are agitating against it. They have declared that if they come to power, they will modify it. Personally speaking, I am very greatly attached to the Parliamentary System of Government. We must understand what it means and we must preserve it in the Constitution.

What is meant by Parliamentary Government ? There is a book on English Constitution by Walter Bagehot. It is, indeed, a classic treatise. It was later expanded by other authorities on Constitutional Government like Laski and others. He has put the conception of the Parliamentary Government in one sentence. He says Parliamentary Government means Government by discussion and not by fisticuffs. You will always find in British system of Government that they hardly ever resort to fisticuffs while taking any decision. The decision is always taken after discussion. Nobody introduces element of disturbance in British Parliament.

Look at the French Politics. Decision are arrived at more than often by knocking knock-out blows. You will find that this system is hardly adequate to those not born in that system. It is an alien institution to them. We must learn, understand and make it a success.

Parliamentary Democracy is unknown to us at present. But India, at one time had Parliamentary Institutions. India was far more advanced in ancient times. If you go through the '*Suktas*' of *Mahaparinibbana*, you will find ample evidence in support of my point. In these '*Suktas*' it is stated that while Bhagwan Buddha was dying at Kusinara (Kusinagara) a message to the effect was sent to the Mallas who were sitting in session at that time. They were devoted to Parliamentary Institutions. When they received the message about Buddha, they decided that they shall not close the session, but would carry on with their work and will go to Kusinara after finishing of the business of the Parliament. There are innumerable references in our literature to prove that Parliamentary System of Government was not unknown to us.

There are many rules about Parliamentary Procedure. May's Parliamentary practice is generally followed. One rule that is invariably followed everywhere is that there can be no discussion without a motion. That is why there is no discussion on a question. This rule was also practised in our land in ancient times. The system of secret ballot now in vogue is also not new to us. It was followed in Buddhist *Sanghas*. They had the ballot papers which they called, '*Salapatraka Grahakas*'. Unfortunately, we have lost all this past heritage that was good. Historians of India must tackle this question as to why these Parliamentary Institutions disappeared from our land. But I find that they cannot or do not want to find out the reasons for it. Ancient India was the master of the World. There was such intellectual freedom in ancient India as was nowhere else to be found. Then why this ancient civilisation went to dogs ? Why was India subjected to autocratic monarchies ? We were familiar with Parliamentary Institutions. We know about votes, voting, committees and other things related to Parliamentary Institutions. Today, Parliamentary System of Government is alien to us. If we go to village, we will find that the villagers do not understand what

is vote, what is party. They find it something strange, something alien. It is, therefore, a great problem as to how to preserve this institution. We will have to educate public, we will have to tell them the benefits of Parliamentary Democracy and of Parliamentary System of Government.

We know what Bagehot means by Parliamentary Government. But today his definition is of no use, it is utterly inadequate. There are three main things inherent in the Parliamentary System of Government.

Parliamentary Government means negations of hereditary rule. No person can claim to be hereditary ruler. Whoever wants to rule must be elected by the people from time to time. He must obtain the approval of the people. Hereditary rule has no sanction in the Parliamentary System of Government.

Secondly, any law, any measure applicable to the public life of the people must be based on the advice of the people chosen by the people. No single individual can presume the authority that he knows everything, that he can make the laws and carry the Government. The laws are to be made by the representatives of the people in the Parliament. They are the people who can advise the men in whose name the law is proclaimed. That is the difference between the monarchical system of Government and the Democratic System of Government. In monarchy, the affairs of the people are carried on in the name of a monarch and under the authority of a monarch. In democracy, the affairs of the public are carried on in the name of the head of the State : but the laws and the executive measures are the authority on which the Government is carried on. The head of the State is the titular head ; he is merely a symbol. He is a consecrated '*Murti*.' He can be worshipped but he is not allowed to carry out the Government of the Country. The Government of the country is carried out, though in his name, by the elected representatives of the people.

Thirdly and lastly, Parliamentary System of the Government means that at a stated period those who want to advise the head of the State must have the confidence of the people in themselves renewed. In Britain, formerly, the elections to the Parliament were every seven years. The Chartists agitated against this. They wanted

annual elections. The motive behind this agitation was very praise-worthy, indeed. It would have been best in the interests of the people if annual election were held, had it been possible, of course. But, Parliamentary elections are very costly affairs. So some sort of compromise was arrived at and five years period was supposed to be a responsible period at which the Legislators and the Ministers were to go back to the People and obtain the fresh renewal of their confidence.

This is also not enough. Parliamentary System of Government is much more than Government by discussion. There are two pillars on which the Parliamentary System of Government rests. These are the fulcrums on which the mechanism works. Those two pillars are (i) an opposition and (ii) free and fair elections.

For the last 20 or 30 years, we acclimatised to one single political party. We have nearly forgotten the necessity and importance of 'opposition' for the fair working of Parliamentary Democracy. We are continuously told that opposition is an evil. Here again we are forgetting what the past history has to teach us. You know that there were '*Nibandhkaras*' to interpret the Vedas and Smrities. They used to begin their comments on '*Slokas*' and '*Sutras*' by stating firstly the '*Purva Paksha*' the one side of the questions. They used to follow up by giving the '*Uttar Paksha*'- the other side. By this they wanted to show us that the question raised was not an easy question : it is a question where there is dispute, discussion and doubt. Then they used to give what they termed as '*Adhikaran*' where they used to criticise both the '*Pakshas*'. Finally, they gave the '*Siddhant*', their own decisions. Here from we can find that all our ancient teachers believed in two party system of Government.

One important thing in the Parliamentary Democracy is that people should know the other side, if there are two sides to a question. Hence, a functional opposition is required. Opposition is the key to a free political life. No democracy can do without it. Britain and Canada, the two exponents of Parliamentary Systems of Governments recognize this important fact and in both countries the leader of 'opposition' is paid salary by the Government. They regard the 'opposition' as an essential thing. People of these countries believe that the 'opposition' should be as much alive as the Government. The Government may suppress the facts, the Government may have only one-sided propaganda. The people have provision against this eventuality in these two countries.

Now the question arises as to whether there is any desire on the part of the party in power to permit any opposition to be created. Congress does not want any 'opposition'. Congress is attempting to gather people of sundry views under one canopy. I ask you whether this is a desirable trend in the political life of this country ?

Free and fair elections is the other pillar on which Parliamentary Democracy rests. Free and fair elections are necessary for the transfer of power from one section of the community to the other in a peaceful manner and without any bloodshed. In olden times, if a king died, there was at least one murder in the palace. Revolution used to take place in palace resulting in murders before the new king used to take the reigns of his country into his authority. This has been the history of India. Elections must be completely free and fair. People must be left to themselves to choose those whom they want to send to the Legislatures.

What about free and fair elections ? We must not lose sight of the fact that 'Big Business' is trying to play a great part in political life of this country. The amount that is being contributed to the Congress on behalf of the 'Big Business' is very dangerous thing. If moneyed people try to influence the elections by contributing to the election fund of any political party, what will be the result. If the party to which they have supported financially comes into power, they will naturally try to extract concessions for themselves either by modifying the present legislation or by influencing the party in power to legislate in such a manner as would be beneficial to their interests. I ask you gentlemen, whether under these circumstances there is any hope left for the Parliamentary System of Government to do any good to the country. I would like you to refer to the Mahabharata. During the battle between the Pandvas and the Kaurvas, Bhishma and Drona were on the side of Kaurvas. Pandvas were in the right and the Kaurvas were in the wrong. Bhishma admitted this. When somebody asked Bhishma as to why he was supporting the Kaurvas if he found the Pandvas to be in the right. Bhishma replied that memorable sentence :

"I must be loyal to the salt : If I eat the food of the Kaurvas, I must take their side even if they might be in the wrong."

Today the same thing is happening. Congress is accepting the financial help of the Banias, Marwaries and other multi-millionaires. Congress is eating their food and it follows, therefore, naturally that Congress will have to take the side of these 'Big Business' at all crucial times.

We also find that the Government servants are influencing the elections in favour of the party which is feeding them and their dependants. No less a personality than Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, at the inaugural session of the Bhartiya Jan Sangh at Delhi recently, openly charged the Government servants of helping the Congress and thereby nullifying the elections from being free and fair. Under these circumstances, do you, gentlemen, think that there is any hope for the Parliamentary Democracy to succeed.

If Parliamentary Democracy fails in this country and it is bound to fail for the reasons mentioned by me, the only result will be rebellion, anarchy and Communism. If the people in power do not realize that people will not tolerate hereditary authority, then this country is doomed, Either Communism will come, Russia having the sovereignty over our country, destroying individual liberty and our independence or the section of the people who are disgruntled for the failure of the party in power will start rebellion and anarchy will prevail. Gentlemen, I want you to take note of these eventual certainties and if you wish that Parliamentary System of Government and Parliamentary Democracy prevail in this country, if you are satisfied that we will be assured of our liberty of thought, speech and action, if we should preserve our independence, if we cherish the inherent right of individual liberty, then it is your duty as students, as intelligent community of our country, to strive your utmost to cherish this Parliamentary System of Government in its true spirit and work for it.

Gentlemen, I have done. I thank you for having given me this opportunity to address this August gathering. ¹



¹ : Lokrajya : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Special Number, April 16, 1981. Pp. 45-48.

IF OUR TRUE REPRESENTATIVES ARE NOT ELECTED, INDEPENDENCE WILL BE A FARCE

Dr. Ambedkar's Speech during Election campaign in Ludhiana, on 28th October 1951.

He said,

Dear brothers and sisters,

This is the first time that I have visited Ludhiana to speak to our people. Many times before I proposed to visit this place but due to certain unavoidable circumstances, I could not do so. What an auspicious occasion it is that you all have gathered here !

You know in two-three months elections are going to be held in which many parties are taking part. The Scheduled Castes Federation is also putting its candidates for the election. We will contest all the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament and also some general seats where we have sufficient number of votes. I hope that our candidates will be successful. Our candidates' success depends mostly upon our own people. If all our people voted for our candidates, I am sure of our success, I would therefore urge that all the Scheduled Caste people should vote for the candidates put by the Scheduled Castes Federation, which is the only organisation of the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes.

I want to tell you how the British people have deceived during the period of their rule over India. They were successful in establishing their Raj in Hindustan although they were hundreds of miles away. First of all when the East India Company came to India its purpose was only to do business but by and by the Britishers became anxious to establish their *Raj* here. How were they able to achieve that objective ? They had no army of their own in India. Nobody has so far been able to tell how the Britishers were able to subdue all the *Rajas* and *Maharajas* of India without army of their own. I am now going to answer this question. The British people became the rulers of India with the help of the Scheduled Castes people, who were called the Untouchables; who were illiterate and with whom the

treatment of the High Caste Hindus was very degrading. They had no means of livelihood and were always at the mercy of these High Caste people. Thus, they had no alternative but to join the British army and earn their livelihood. I do not want to impress upon you that what has happened was good but I want to emphasise something else. I want to point out that even the people whom we helped to establish their power in India have treated our people in such a way. Our people died in the army for the sake of these Britishers. But what they got in return ? Who were benefitted ? In spite of the fact that the Scheduled Caste, people helped the Britishers, Brahmins and other High Castes people derived full benefit out of it. The Britishers educated their children and gave all financial assistance to them whereas our people were not paid any attention. This resulted in the well-being of these High Castes at the expense of the poor Scheduled Castes who remained as before. This is the reason why up-till-now there are no well-to-do Scheduled Castes families; why their children are not educated and why they are generally backward. Consequently, the important posts in the Army, Police and other department of administration are in the hands of these High Caste people at present. The British people should have done something for the betterment of our people but they did not do anything for us. In 1857 when there was mutiny what were the causes of that ? Because the Britishers failed to do anything for our people, our people in the army had to revolt against them. When the mutiny was subdued, and it was found that our people in the army had revolted against the Britishers, they stopped recruiting our people in the army any further. Instead Hindus and Rajputs were recruited in the army. Thus the main source of income of our people lost. In 1947 when the British people left India, our conditions remained the same as were before they came to India. At the time of transfer of power to Indians, Britishers handed over all power to the High Caste people. We did not get anything. We were left at the mercy of these brutes.

From this you can well understand the way in which other people treated the Scheduled Castes. This is the reason, we have remained so backward up-to-now. I want to ask now one question, whether you still want to remain backward and work as slaves in the hands of these high caste people ? When

the Aryans came over to India, *Varna* system came into force. People were given the ranks in the society according to their birth. Some were called Brahmins, some Kshatrias, some Vaishyas, some Shudras and others Untouchables. According to this categorisation, the Untouchables were the lowest of all and were totally disconnected from the society. The relation between a Caste Hindu and an Untouchable is that of a foot and shoe. When we enter our house we leave our shoes outside. The same way, *Acchuts* are kept out of the society and are not given any rights whatsoever. We have borne this treatment at the hands of Caste Hindus for centuries and are still suffering socially, economically and politically.

After struggling for many years, we have achieved certain political rights which have been incorporated in the Indian Constitution itself. For twenty long years, I fought against Mahatma Gandhi. He was against the idea of giving us any separate rights. His argument was that if the Untouchables are given separate rights, then they will never be able to come to Hindu fold. They will remain out from the Hindus forever. At the Round Table Conference also Mahatma Gandhi opposed our demand for Separate Electorates. After so many years of struggle, we have secured some political powers. Now we can send our own representatives to the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament against the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

There are many parties which are anxious to snatch away these rights. They are anxious to get our votes and send their own henchmen to the seats reserved for our people. You can very well understand their motives. They want that the Scheduled Castes should remain where they are and should not come into power so that the menial jobs which our people are performing should not suffer. So you will have to be careful about your votes in the coming election. You should see that only our true representatives are elected with our votes and none else. Only then your rights which have been incorporated in the Constitution can be safeguarded.

If our true representatives are not elected to the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament, then we cannot enjoy

freedom. Independence will be a farce for our people. This will be independence of the High Caste people and not ours. But if our true representatives are in Parliament and State Assemblies, they can fight for our cause and get grievances redressed. Only then our children can get proper education; only then our poverty can be removed and only then we will be given equal share in all spheres of life. Although special privileges have been provided for the Scheduled Castes people in the Indian Constitution, the other parties specially the Congress are unnecessarily interfering with them. They are putting up their own henchmen for election to the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes. How can the people elected on Congress tickets safeguard our interests when they will have to go according to the wishes of their master ? What can they do for us?

I want to tell you about the people who were elected to the Parliament on Congress tickets to the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes. They were about 30 in number and in the Parliament for the last four years. Not a single member out of the thirty raised any question in the Parliament about the grievances of the Scheduled Castes. Even if a question was put in Parliament, the Speaker did not allow it and the matter ended there. If the Speaker was generous and had allowed the question and it was included in the business then the Chief Whip of the Congress would go to the member concerned and ask him to withdraw the question before it is printed. Per chance, if the question had been printed, then the Chief Whip would ask the member concerned to leave the Station for the day when the answer is required and thus there would be no discussion at all in the Parliament on the matter raised as the member himself would not be there. For one month there is discussion on the Budget in Parliament. At that time any person can speak on the Budget and point out that such and such privileges should be provided for his community or his party. He can point out that so much money is being spent on unnecessary projects whereas the important proposals have been neglected. During these four years, I have not seen a single member moving any Cut Motion. This is all due to Congress Party's discipline (Dunda). If the members wanted to move a Resolution, they had to obtain the

permission of the Chief Whip long before it was actually moved. Neither these Members put up any Bill during these four years. How can the Untouchables, Indian Christians, Anglo Indians etc. avail of the privileges provided for them in the Constitution, if the seats reserved for them are occupied by their enemies through the Congress ticket ?

I want to make the point clear that if you voted for the Congress, you will have to suffer for ever. Our representatives on Congress ticket will keep silent in the State Assemblies and the Parliament. Our interests can be safeguarded only if our true representatives are elected on Federation's ticket which is the only organisation of the Scheduled Castes. Had there been any possibility of getting our grievances redressed in the Congress I would not have left the Organisation. I know that Congress has sufficient money and will try to buy the votes with that. But you should be careful about it. If I wanted I could remain in the Congress for ever and definitely have got a good place there. But I would have done only if I had selfish motives and not any regard for my community. I would have remained there, if I was in need of any licence or permit for myself. The man seeking licence and permits can do so at the expense of his community. He will do anything for his own self and nothing for his community. This is the experience I have gained during the period I remained in the Congress Government.

The English people could do for the welfare of our community during their stay in India had they wished so but they also deceived us. That time has passed now and another phase has come into being. If at this time also we are not careful and kept our eyes closed, then we will be ruined. If you want that your coming generations should not suffer as you are suffering now, then you should do something for that now. When you plant a tree, you get the fruit after some time. I want to impress upon you that the reservation of seats in the Assemblies and the Parliament is only for 10 years. Although I wanted it till Untouchability was prevalent in India, our own people who became Members of the Parliament on Congress tickets opposed me, not to speak of members belonging to High Castes. So thinking that

something is better than nothing, I agreed that reservation may be for 10 years and secured something for our people. The reservation is only for two elections and only upto that time, the interested parties like the Congress will come to you and request for votes. And this way, this period of 10 years will pass away and there will be nobody to ask for extension of this period. I want to ask you, what will you do then ? Will these Congress people come to you then and request you to stand on their tickets? Certainly not. They are not such fools. They want to befool you people. These Congressmen will not even spit on the face of these people who are seeking Congress tickets today. So you should all ponder over this problem and then decide to which candidate you have to vote.

Every party must have either power or money. Our community has neither any money nor any power. We are living in the villages in small numbers at the mercy of these High Caste people. Baniyas and Marwaris etc. are also not powerful but they have got money. With money they can buy anything. So this is the opportunity for you to do something for yourselves. If you are united, you can send your representatives to the Assemblies and Parliament for safeguarding of your interests otherwise you will be ruined. So you must unite under the banner of the Scheduled Castes Federation to pull your community out of chaos. Every *Achhut* should help the Federation in electing their true representatives. Many parties will come to you and ask for votes but do not be misled by them.

A few days back, Pandit Nehru came here. It was reported that two-three lakhs of people gathered to hear him. I do not know how many people were there. Yesterday when I visited Jullundur over two lakhs of people gathered there but the pressmen published that thirty thousand people had gathered there. What I want to tell you is that if there is any conference of the Congress, then even if the audience is very thin, they will publish that a large gathering witnessed the Conference. For five they will say fifty for fifty they will say five hundred, for five hundred they will say five thousands and for five thousands they

will report five lakhs. I do not mind this criticism of the pressmen. They all have criticised me for so many years but in spite of that I have progressed physically as well as mentally. I do not want to witness large gatherings. What I want is that our people should organise themselves to fight against the atrocities of these Caste Hindus. I want that our people should hear me. Whether they gather in small numbers or large numbers is immaterial.

Every political party has put forward its Manifesto. Every party promises that if it comes into power it will do this and that. Scheduled Castes Federation has also published a very voluminous Manifesto but when they came to understand that ordinary people would not follow it, they amended it and compressed into a small one. I hope by and by their Manifesto will become smaller and smaller and a day will come when there will be no Manifesto of the Congress. I want to tell you what should be in the Manifesto and what should not be. I challenge all the political parties to constitute a committee to find out which Manifesto is the best and I have no doubt in mind that our Manifesto will be the best of all. All the parties have promised many things in their Manifestoes to the people. To promise is easy but difficult to put it into practice. If you promise one thing you can promise one hundred. Manifesto should not be a list of promises only. It should deal with the problems facing the country and also how to solve these problems. Is there anything of that sort in the Manifesto of the Congress ? The only thing impressed in the Congress Manifesto is the Muslim problem. According to it, there is no other problem facing the country. Can anybody agree to this ? Of course, Muslim problem was there when India was united and when there was no Pakistan. But then too, this was not the only problem. The Muslims have migrated to Pakistan, and only Hindus, Sikhs and other minorities are in India. Do you think that India is now facing Muslim problem ? Do you agree that nothing should be done for the Depressed Classes, who are ten times poorer and backward than the Muslims ? There are Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Criminal Tribes, which need the best attention of the Government. But the Congressmen say that people should not be communal minded and should not demand some special privileges for these backward classes.

The other problem is that of poverty in India. People in India are very poor so much so that 90 per cent people do not get proper meals. They do not get any clothes. They do not have any shelter. Food-stuffs worth crores of rupees are being imported every year. If we have to import even food-stuffs from outside and spend so much, how will we be able to pull on? But all these things have no place in the minds of Congressmen. They have only one problem to solve and that is Muslim problem.

I want to inform you that we are putting up candidates for the coming elections through the Scheduled Castes Federation. The Scheduled Castes Federation is for all Backward Classes. Every Backward Class will be given representation. Nobody should be afraid of it. Chamars and Bhangis are all equal. We should be united and nobody should think himself separate from the other. I want to request all men and women that they should leave aside every thing on the day of polling and go to the polling booths and cast their votes. Already our votes are not sufficient and if the voters do not cast their votes on that day, it would not be good for us. We will be unrepresented. The day of polling is the day of life and death for the Scheduled Castes.

Every political party which is taking part in the coming elections has been allotted a Party Symbol. Our Federation's symbol is 'Elephant'. I have selected this so that there may not be any confusion in the minds of our people. Some parties selected oxen, horses, donkeys as their symbols. But for distinction I have selected 'Elephant'.

This time we will not have the cumulative system of voting so that we may cast all our votes to a single candidate of our choice. But we have distributive system and will have to distribute our votes among different candidates. In a constituency where a seat has been reserved for Scheduled Castes, people will have two votes, one for general seat and the other for the reserved seat. We cannot cast both of our votes to our party candidate who is standing for the reserved seat. We can cast in his favour only one vote and the other vote must be given to the other candidate standing on general seat. So we shall have to join some party which will give their second vote to our

candidate and get our second vote in return. We have not decided as yet which party we will join hands with. Many parties have approached us for alliance but nothing has yet been finalised. Negotiations are going on. We have to think many times before we join hands with any party. But we must join with some party or the other.

In the end I want to tell you that thousands of people come to Delhi from Punjab and U. P. and other distant places to put their grievances before me. Some complain that they have been beaten by the *Zamindars* and when they approached the authorities concerned, decisions were taken against them as the people in power also belong to high castes. So there are so many complaints that it is not possible for me to cope with these single handed. Many people return to their homes disappointed. So I have decided to construct a building in Delhi and to keep a pleader there who will scrutinise our people's complaints and advise them in the matter. We have already purchased a piece of land in New Delhi for the purpose and on that site we want to construct a building which shall be the Head Office of the Federation. People from outside will be entertained there and their grievances heard. We do not have sufficient funds for the construction of this building, although it is absolutely essential. So I request that you all should contribute something according to your means. In this way we shall be able to achieve our purpose. Bawa Tula Dass will tour the whole Punjab for the collection of building Fund. I once again request you to contribute liberally for this noble cause."



POOR PEOPLE MUST UNITE SEPARATELY TO ACHIEVE THEIR PURPOSE

Dr. Ambedkar's Speech at Patiala, Punjab on 29th October 1951 during election campaign. He said,

Dear brothers !

As my friend Mr. Rajbhoj has told you I am not feeling well today. This is due to the fact that I had to travel a long journey by road. So I will not be able to speak for a long time but I will speak on some important topics.

Everybody in India is busy with elections. There are many politicians and parties who have nothing else but elections with them. I very much appreciate the anxiety of the people about the coming elections and agree that we should think many times before we decide to vote for a party or an individual. The people elected now will continue in office for five long years. So we must be very careful about it. This is the time of life and death of political parties as well as individuals. Every citizen and political party has got to take proper part in elections but for this, their very existence is in danger.

You know that today the Congress is the party in power in India. It is forty years old and it has got large funds at its disposal. For the last four or five years, Congress Party is governing over India, Congressmen are now canvassing people to vote for the Congress. They argue that no other party is so powerful to run the Government and can achieve what Congress has achieved in the past and will be able to do in the future. They state only under Congress rule India can prosper and as such all people whatever their religion, caste, creed might be, should vote for the Congress candidates and make them successful in the coming election. This is what Congressmen are propagating.

It is right that Congress has got means of propaganda so much so that every candidate standing for Congress ticket will have more than 100 agents at the disposal for his propaganda. Congress has got its headquarters where so many people are working like government servants. They have got offices of each

and every branch. This is all due to money. Congress is the richest party in India. With money, it can do whatever it likes. Without money no party can propagate and without proper propaganda no other party can flourish. Congress has so moulded the public opinion through propaganda in its favour that now it is trying to do all sorts of things under its cover.

Congress has been in power now for four years and you can well understand what it has done for the people. There is no food, no clothes and no shelter. Congress has failed to deliver the goods during these four years and how can one expect that it would help people if it comes into power again ? Corruption, nepotism and black-market are the only industries which have flourished during the Congress rule. Corruption and other evils are even greater now than during the British rule over India. We are dying of starvation and there is a vast disparity between the rich and the poor. If the Congress has not been able to remove this disparity during the five years, how will it be able to do in future ? Rich people are becoming richer and poor are becoming poorer day by day. What Congress has done in this direction ?

Congress Government is corrupt Government. Congress Minister take bribery. They get money through black-market. They are corrupt. If our Ministers are of such bad character, you can well understand how their subordinates will behave and what will be the position of the labour under the capitalists. I had expected that our present Prime Minister will do something in this connection and bribery, corruption, black-marketing will end for ever. But I am sorry to note that in his Presidential Address to the All India Congress General Session in New Delhi, Pandit Nehru stated that corruption is rampant in other countries also and as such we should not worry very much if it is prevalent in India too. He further added that corruption and bribery is in a very small scale in India as compared to other countries. I do not know how Prime Minister is going to remove this evil when he is openly encouraging it by saying that corruption is in a very small scale here. Even it is in small scale it must be removed. What has the Prime Minister done in this direction? Should he keep quiet if the Ministers and other high officials of the Government are corrupt ?

All what I have said is not my criticism, but the Congressmen have criticised the Congress Ministers and none else. In Madras, for instance, Mr. T. Prakasham was the Premier for some time. When he was turned out from office and Mr. Raje occupied his seat, there were certain charges against Mr. Prakasham and when an enquiry was made it was found that he had earned a huge amount through bribery, etc. He had issued thousands of licenses and permits. The same thing is happening in Madhya Pradesh. There are so many Ministers who have taken bribe but still they are Ministers of the worthy Government. Nobody is taking any action against them but they are being encouraged instead. The people who charge these Ministers are being sent to jail. What is happening in Punjab ? Mr. Sachar and Dr. Bhargava are fighting against each other. Both were Premiers in the Punjab. Both have pleaded not guilty. Each has demanded an enquiry against the other. No one can deny the fact that both took bribes and encouraged black-marketing during their rule in the Punjab and still no enquiry is being made. Now they are again trying for the Premierships. During the coming elections, they want to put as many candidates of their own camp on Congress tickets as would be sufficient to support them for the Premiership. The last date for the filing of papers in the Punjab is 5th November but upto this day i.e. 29th October 1951, no list has so far been finalised because of their differences and I think that they will never come to a point.

When any person has charged any Minister or other Government official for bribery, it is the duty of the Government to institute an enquiry and punish the culprit. No Government can exist if it allows its Ministers and other high dignitaries to take bribe in such a way. If every Government Minister will make money what will be the Government then ? In England, one Minister was charged for bribery in the House of Commons. Mr. Atlee, the then Prime Minister in England, at once ordered an enquiry. A Commission was appointed to enquire into the matter. The Commission stated in its report that the Minister concerned had taken some cloth from a friend of his, who happened to be a businessman and that this act of his cannot be

taken as bribe. But even on this ground that he accepted the cloth from a businessman, whether he was friend or enemy, without paying any money, Mr. Atlee turned out that Minister from office. But our Congress Government does not even feel its duty to enquire into the charges against the Ministers, not to speak of their removal from office.

Congressmen ask the people to vote for the Congress and promise that they will work for the welfare of all. They state that they will remove poverty and help the backward classes so that they will achieve a better standard of life. I want to ask you, can the snake and the mongoose (Ichneumon) live together. Can cat co-operate with the rat ? Can elephant live with ' Birree ' ? Certainly, if the snake wants to mix up with the mongoose (Ichneumon) and make any profit out of it, it is mistaken. Mongoose will eat up the snake. Rat will be swallowed by the cat, if it wants to join hands with the cat. Similarly, elephant cannot enjoy the life with 'Birree'. Mongoose is the enemy of the snake, cat is the enemy of rat and 'Birree' is the enemy of the elephant. They cannot form a joint company.

Similarly, in the human world, there are weak as well as strong persons. One is the enemy of the other and certainly weak cannot live peacefully in the company with the strong. Money-lender and borrower cannot live peacefully. Money-lender will try to exploit the borrower to his own advantage. Bania (Money-lender) will always try to extract what it can out of the poor people. Brahmins will never show sympathy for the poor Scheduled Castes and if they did so there will be nobody to serve them. There are so many sections in this world which are enemies. There are poor as well as rich sections, and the rich are always there to exploit the poor. Now I want to question you that if we form a party of the snake, mongoose, cat, rat, elephant and 'Birree', will the snake, rat and elephant be safe there ? Certainly not. They will always be at the mercy of their masters. Similarly, if the Depressed Classes join hands with the Brahmins and form a political party, do you think that the Depressed Classes will be safe there ? I warn you to be careful and give fullest consideration to this matter. You should not be caught in the net spread by the Congress. If you think that by joining hands with

the high caste people you will be better off, then you are mistaken. The high caste people will always suppress the backward classes. High Caste people will enjoy the freedom whereas our people will remain as they are. Poor people can never flourish under the rich and must unite separately to achieve their purpose.

To safeguard the interests of the Depressed Classes, we have formed our own political party called the Scheduled Castes Federation. Through our efforts we have secured certain privileges which have been incorporated in the Constitution itself. Certain seats have been reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament. Only Scheduled Castes people can be elected to those seats. But if our true representatives are not elected to the Assemblies and the Congress nominees are elected to the reserved seats, then our rights cannot be safeguarded. Our people elected on the Congress tickets will be tools in the hands of the Congress and they will serve their own selves. Just take the case of the two Scheduled Castes Deputy Ministers who are in the PEPSU Ministry. They were elected on the Congress tickets. What have they done for you ? Our children are uneducated. We are as poor as before. We have not got any lands. We are not treated like human beings in the villages. Have they done anything in this regard? I have come to know that as soon as they came to know that I am visiting Patiala, they started anti-propaganda. They asked the Scheduled Castes people to boycott the Conference. Now you can judge what the people elected on the Congress tickets can do for us. Those who seek Congress tickets are selfish and selfish people can never think of other. You cannot expect anything from them.

To join Congress is easy. It was more easy for me to do so with my qualifications. Everybody will join Congress if it is beneficial to all. But if by joining Congress, we do not benefit, what is the use of our going over to Congress ? Well ! I was in Congress Government . I have never accepted any bribe, I have never tried to use unfair means to collect money. I challenge that there is not a single charge against me.

Our conditions have even worsened with the coming of the Congress into power. No practical steps have been taken to ameliorate our grievances. Every thing has been said but nothing has been done so far for the good of our people. We want to make it clear that we are very much depressed and if this thing continued further, a revolution is inevitable. We thought that our Hindu brothers will do something for the good of our people, but all our hopes have been duped us. Some seats have been reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the Assemblies but our true representatives are not allowed to be elected to these seats. This reservation is only for ten years and what will happen afterwards, we cannot say. Do you think that after ten years we will be well off to compete with the high caste people in the society? Will our people be so rich as to fight side by side with the Hindus? I want to give a warning to these high caste people that if our conditions remained as they are today, then we will have to use some other means. Either they will live here or we will live. We are fed up with this sort of living and are not going to tolerate it any more.

Brahmin and Baniya have never died for freedom although they are the only fortunate who are deriving benefits now. Let me know how many of them have died in the last war? How many of them are in the army? If there is conscription, our people will be the first to go to the army. They will do their duty as they have done previously. Poor have always protected the rich although rich have never shown any sympathy with them. Therefore I warn these high caste people that a revolution is inevitable unless something is done for the betterment of the backward classes.

For thirty long years, I fought for the cause of my community. I have no selfish motives. I never complained that I am not a Minister and that I should be given some high post. I have never demanded anything for my own self. Gandhi always opposed me. When Gandhi demanded *Swaraj*, I told him that I entirely agree with his demand and will definitely support him but asked him only one question as to what will be the position of the Scheduled Castes in his so-called *Swaraj*. Will our people be given some good standard in life? Will they be educated? Will there be no harassment of our people in *Swaraj*? Now the people of India are free, what benefits have we derived

out of it ? If we are backward today, we are because of these high caste people, who have kept us away from society. They have not allowed us to make any progress simply because there was no other class to do their service. There was no other community to do the menial jobs which we are performing. There is no difference between them and we people. We are just like them. But the only difference is that according to their *Dharma*, we are in this world to serve them and not have equal right. These high caste people are putting mountains before us. We are put to all sorts of difficulties so that we may not make any progress.

We have secured certain rights but these Congressmen are bent upon depriving us from the benefit of these rights. Against the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes, they are putting their own candidates. When the Congress Party gives tickets to high caste people for the general seats, they ask them so many questions. They want to know first, how many times did the man concerned go to jail ? They want to know what interest he has taken in the Struggle for Independence. I ask these Congressmen, why these questions are not put to a Scheduled Caste candidate who seeks Congress ticket for the reserved seat ? Why his services to the Nation are not taken into account ? Why only illiterate and unpopular people are selected for the reserved seats ? What are the grounds for their selection ? They should ask them, whether they helped Congress in the Civil Disobedience Movement or not ? Why only fools are selected ?

If our true representatives are elected to the Assemblies through the Scheduled Castes Federation, we can have our grievances redressed. If they do not do anything for us, we can put them to task. I have been in politics for 30 years now. Myself and Gandhi entered politics together. For eight years I was a Minister. Had I wished, I would have continued as a Minister in the Government for the whole of my life but I have no selfish motives. So I have left the Congress Government as I think I cannot serve my community while remaining there. If you did not pay any heed to my request and our true representatives are not elected, then we will have to suffer for ever. I may tell you this reservation is only for ten years i.e. for only two elections. After ten years, reservation will go. I wanted that

the reservation should remain so long as the Untouchability is there but our own members who were elected to the Parliament on Congress tickets opposed me leaving aside the other Caste Hindu members. I ask those people who seek Congress tickets, what will they do after the reservation is not there ? Will the Congress ask them to stand on general seats on its ticket ? Nobody will then even spit on them. During the past, these high caste people have treated us in a degrading manner and they will do it after the reservation is gone. I tell you if they are sympathising with us at the moment, it is only because they want to make us fools and put their yesmen at the reserved seats. After the reservation is abolished, they will again call us Chamars, Bhangis. Therefore, I tell you that you should be very cautious now and unite under the banner of the Scheduled Castes Federation. It is your duty to give your votes to the Federation candidates who will die for your cause.

Now I want to tell you a few important things. Firstly, the election symbol of the Scheduled Castes Federation is 'Elephant'. I have come to know that some other party has also selected this symbol with this distinction that our symbol is only 'Elephant' whereas they have a '*Charkha*' (Spinning wheel) over the Elephant. So be careful about it. Do not be misled. Our Party Symbol is simply 'Elephant' without any *Charkha*.

Secondly, we are very few in number. If we put our candidates, they will be pulled down by other parties as they have got majority of votes. Our strength is only 10 per cent in the villages and you will agree that with so little votes, we cannot succeed in the coming elections. So I would request you all that every man and woman should cast his vote on the polling day leaving aside other affairs. The result will be that we will at least get our votes. If even the few voters, did not cast their votes it will be very difficult for our candidates to succeed.

Thirdly, I want to impress upon you that owing to our being minority, we shall have to join hands with some party in the elections. There will be distributive system of voting this time and where we have reserved seats, all the people will have two votes. One for the candidate who is standing on the general seat

and the other for the candidate who is standing on the reserved seat. We will give one vote to our candidate who is standing on the reserved seat and the second vote to the candidate of that party, who will cast their second vote to our candidate. We have not yet decided with which party we are making alliance. Negotiations are going on and in a few days it will be decided. But one thing should be clear in our minds that we are not joining hands with Congress at any cost. You should not fear of Congress now. It has weakened and its members are fighting against one another. Congress will die its natural death.

In the end, I once again want to request you to vote for the candidate who is fighting on the Scheduled Castes Federation ticket. Federation candidates will be your true representatives, who will do everything for the welfare of our community. They will not be selfish. They will serve their community to the last."



..... LET US SAVE OUR KITH AND KIN

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the students of Lucknow University on 7th November 1951. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leader of the Scheduled Castes Federation, warned the country against "indifference to the Backward Classes" and said that if they were frustrated in their attempt to rise to the status of equality, the Scheduled Castes might prefer the Communist system and the fate of the country would be doomed."

Dr. Ambedkar said : " If we are to avoid any such revolution, my first submission to politicians is that they should recognise this problem urgently." Dr. Ambedkar deplored that though the Constitution had introduced the system of adult franchise recognising the principles of one man, one vote in the economic and social life of India that principle had not been adopted. Dr. Ambedkar referred to the Kashmir problem and said that Kashmir was not a unitary State. It was composite State, consisting of Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. Jammu and Ladak were non-Muslim areas whereas the Kashmir Valley was Muslim. He said: "We do not know how the Kashmiris will vote but India is committed to the United Nations for an overall plebiscite. If the plebiscite goes in favour of Pakistan what will happen to the 20 per cent non-Muslim population? That is a very big question. If we cannot save the whole of Kashmiris at least let us save our Kith and Kin. It is a plain analysis of fact which cannot be denied."

GLOOMY FUTURE

Replying to a question by a student, Dr. Ambedkar said he was very pessimistic about the future of India, because foreign countries did not consider India an important country and internally the administration had completely deteriorated in comparison with the British regime. Corruption and nepotism were rampant and the Congress High Command did not institute any inquiry against certain Ministers by Congressmen themselves. On the other hand they were protected by them.

Dr. Ambedkar said that during the British regime famines occurred at an interval of 15 to 20 years but these days each year brought a famine. "What has happened to the economy of this country? Are we going to die like flies?" he asked".¹

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¹ : The Times of India, dated 10th November 1951.

WHY I DID NOT RESIGN EARLIER ?

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who will arrive in Bombay on November 20, 1951 will be given a joint reception by the State Socialist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation.

Dr. Ambedkar is visiting Bombay on a six-day election tour of the State and to launch the Scheduled Castes Federation's election campaign. The campaign will be launched at a public meeting in the city on November 22.”¹

“ A large crowd gave a warm and enthusiastic reception to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, President of the Scheduled Castes Federation, on his arrival in Bombay on Sunday, the 18th November 1951.

More than 6,000 people, among whom were many women thronged Victoria Terminus to welcome the former Law Minister on his first visit to the city since his resignation from the Cabinet. He will stay in Bombay for a week and will inaugurate the election campaign on behalf of the Federation.

Dr. Ambedkar, who is contesting the election to the House of the people from the Bombay City North constituency (Reserved seat) will address an election meeting on Thursday.

Shouts of “ Ambedkar Zindabad ” rent the air as the Punjab Mail, in which he was travelling, steamed into the station. He was given a joint reception on the platform by the Bombay Socialist Party and the Federation. Mr. Ashok Mehta, General Secretary of the Party, greeted Dr. Ambedkar and was closeted with him in his compartment for about 15 minutes.

After the official reception, Dr. Ambedkar motored to the extreme end of the road between platform Nos. 8 and 9 where a separate reception on behalf of the various taluka committees of the Federation in Bombay was held in his honour. Here Dr. Ambedkar was garlanded on behalf of the taluka committees and other institutions.

¹ : The Times of India, dated 12th November 1951.

Among those present at the reception was Mr. S. K. Bole, one of Dr. Ambedkar's old associates. A measure of mirth was introduced into the reception when Dr. Ambedkar invited 85 year old Mr. Bole to sit on his lap, no separate chair being provided to the latter at the reception. Mr. Bole sat on Dr. Ambedkar's lap amidst general laughter." ¹

"Under the auspices of the Bombay Branch of the Scheduled Castes Federation, a reception was given to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the playground at Bhoiwada, Bombay at about 6.30 p.m. on November 22nd 1951. Shri R. G. Kharat presided. About 5,000 persons attended.

The President said that the meeting had been called by the Bombay-Branch of the Scheduled Castes Federation to give reception to Dr. Ambedkar. Under his leadership they had built up a strong unity under the Blue Flag and now even the other people were gathering round the Blue Flag. He said that Dr. Ambedkar was standing for the election of the Parliament and he would give instructions as regards the next general elections and they should properly carry out his instructions.

Shri J. G. Bhatankar garlanded Dr. Ambedkar and Shrimati Ambedkar. He said that it was decided to present a purse of Rs. 25,000 to Dr. Ambedkar but so far they were not able to collect that much amount. Whatever so far collected were in the two bags and he hoped that the remaining amount would soon be collected and presented to him in due course before the elections.

Dr. Ambedkar while replying to the reception said that many people were asking him two questions viz. why he did not resign earlier. If he had resigned earlier, it would have been possible to build up a strong front against the Congress. The second question was that why he failed to join hands with the Congress. He said that for the last 4 years he was one of the Ministers of the Congress Government. He had gone in the Ministry in order to know by close contact with the top leaders in the Congress as to whether they

¹ : The Times of India, dated 20th November 1951.

really desired to do good to the Harijans and from his experience he could say that the Congressmen did not really desire to do good to Harijans. He said that they had got reserved seats in the Parliament and in the Assemblies for a period of 10 years. He was sure that though the Government had made rules for the removal of Untouchability, even after ten years Untouchability would remain and their condition would be as before. He said that a provision was made in the Constitution that Harijans should be given $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent services in Government departments but Shri Munshi and other Congressmen wanted to put a time limit to this concession but due to his opposition they were not successful. He once asked Shri Rajagopalachari the per cent of Harijans in the Government services and from the circular he issued to various departments he came to know that in none of the departments Harijans were employed. He further said that during the time of the British he was in the Executive Council and he was in charge of the departments viz. Labour and P. B. O. and the British sanctioned a sum of Rs. 3 lacs for the education of the Harijans in foreign countries. He said that the present Government was spending the amount but they had stopped sending Harijans to foreign countries for education. He said that during the time of the British many Harijans were sent to foreign countries to get the knowlegde of fitters etc. He further said that at the time of partition the Pakistan Government allowed Caste Hindus to come to India but that Government prevented Harijans from leaving Pakistan and many were converted as Muslims. The Mahar Batallian managed to bring some Harijans to India but they were not given any help by the India Government. Some offered hunger strike at the Rajghat but no one paid any heed to their strike and he had to tell them that their grievances would not be redressed by the Congress Government. He said that as he could not do any good to the Harijans, he decided to resign and Pandit Nehru did not give any reply, so far to the charge made by him against the Congress Government. He further said that as they were about 8 per cent, they could not contest the elections without the help of any other political party, and therefore they dicided to join hands with the Socialists. He said that they would continue to have their Federation for the redress of their special grievances. He asked

the audience to be honest in the elections with the party with which they had joined hands. He expressed satisfaction for the satisfactory working of the *Samata Sainik Dal* and he hoped that they would be of great use in the next general elections. He said that he would leave Bombay after 4 days, and it would not be possible for him to appear before them again. He asked to give their votes to the candidates of the Scheduled Castes Federation and of the Socialist Party and none of them should remain at home on that day. ”¹

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¹ : Police Report, Source Material, Vol. I, Pp. 388-389.

FEDERATION WILL NOT GIVE UP ITS SEPARATE POLITICAL ENTITY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who was inaugurating the election campaign of the Scheduled Castes Federation, of which he is the President, at a mammoth public meeting at St. Xavier's College ground at Parel, on 22nd November 1951, reiterated the charges he had made in that statement and said that he had left the Government in which he had worked for four years because he was convinced that the Congress and the Government were utterly indifferent to the welfare and progress of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, former Law Minister of the Government of India, declared that Mr. Nehru had deliberately evaded answering the charges he had levelled against the Government and the Congress party, because charges were true and unanswerable.

Mr. Nehru had many occasions to contradict the statement he had issued when he resigned from the Government last month, but the Prime Minister preferred to remain silent knowing fully well that the charges were indisputable.

He had occasions to watch Congress leaders from close quarters and he could now say with confidence that the Congress had no sympathy and love for the Oppressed Backward Classes.

He complained that when he was a Minister in the Congress Government he was not only not given charge of portfolios promised by the Prime Minister, but he was shut out from the policy-making Cabinet Committees.

As a Minister he could not criticise the policy of the Government nor could he ask any question in Parliament about the Scheduled Castes.

Dr. Ambedkar repudiated the charge made against him by some Congressmen that he had played a very insignificant part

in drafting the Constitution. There could be no greater lie than this, he said, and added that he was prepared to prove by documentary evidence how his colleagues on the Drafting Committee had showed little interest in the drafting of the Constitution. They rarely attended the meetings of the Committee and the whole burden, therefore, fell on him and the Secretary of the Committee.

He detailed a long list of instances to show the indifferent attitude of Congress to the grievances of the Scheduled Castes and he said that even the foreign British Government was more sympathetic and generous to them and sincerely worked for their amelioration.

Dr. Ambedkar referred to the recent electoral alliance of the Socialist Party and the Federation and called upon Scheduled Castes voters to cast their votes for Socialist and Federation candidates. He was confident that his community would stand solidly behind the alliance and return the candidates put up by the two parties to the legislatures.

The alliance, he said, had been entered into a spirit of 'give and take' and they must abide by it. However, the Federation would not give up its separate political entity.

Dr. Ambedkar was presented with a purse containing collection made from the sale of tickets at the meeting. The amount was not announced."¹



¹ : The Times of India, dated 23rd November 1951.

THE HINDU CODE BILL WOULD IMPROVE CONDITION OF WOMEN

“ Addressing a meeting of women in Bombay on November 24, 1951 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that the Hindu Code Bill would improve the condition of women and give them more rights and requested them to support the Bill and vote for candidates who would bring real democracy in the country. He regreted that some Congressmen were against the bill, trying to delay it some way or other.”¹



¹ The Bombay Secret Abstract, dated 1st December 1951.

IT IS BAD FOR PEOPLE TO REMAIN IDLE AND INDIFFERENT

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in an election meeting in Bombay on Sunday the 25th November 1951, invited Mr. Nehru to leave Congress and “ Join hands with socialists and people like me for the good of the country.”

More than two lakhs of people gathered at Shivaji Park for the meeting called by the Socialist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation.

The blue star-studded flags of the Federation and the Red flags of the Socialist Party were very much in evidence. Hundreds of volunteers, in blue and red caps of the two parties, regulated the crowd which caused a traffic jam near Shivaji Park.

The former Law Minister appealed to the people to vote for him. He said he would fight for United Maharashtra in Parliament if he were elected. The two objectives of his life were the betterment of the Scheduled Castes and good Constitution for the country.

Referring to Mr. Nehru's Chowpatty speech in which the Prime Minister had denied his accusations, Dr. Ambedkar asserted that the Congress had not bettered the condition of the Scheduled Castes and that “ the foreign policy of the Government regarding China and Russia is disastrous.”

He stated that he had made these charges two and a half months ago when he resigned from the Cabinet, but Mr. Nehru had not taken notice of them and had only come out with his denial after reading Friday's newspapers which reported his (Dr. Ambedkar's) repetition.

About his differences on foreign policy, Dr. Ambedkar said he had not thought it important enough to make his difference of opinion on a Cabinet issue. Moreover, he was completely absorbed in the more important and laborious work of drafting the Constitution.

He thought the Prime Minister had cut a very sorry figure when denying his charges.

“ It is a matter of fact though Mr. Nehru has denied it,” Dr. Ambedkar said referring to the Government’s alleged indifference to the Scheduled Castes. The right course for the Prime Minister was to issue a Press Statement detailing what the Government had done for the betterment of the Scheduled Castes and let the people decide whether he was wrong or the Government.

He challenged Mr. Nehru’s claim that Congress alone would be able to form a stable Government in the country. There were many internal differences in the Congress and he cited several instances. “ The equation that Mr. Nehru is Congress is not true,” he said.

“ Mr. Nehru is living in a dream world. The sooner he realises it, the better.” Dr. Ambedkar asserted, observing that Congressmen had deposed the Congress President, Mr. Tandon, and elected Mr. Nehru in his place only for the sake of the elections.

“ Mr. Nehru, who is a naive man, cannot understand this. I am afraid about what his position will be after the elections are over. “ Because I am a realist, know better than Mr. Nehru what other Congress leaders think about him.” Dr. Ambedkar declared.

He thought that when the election of the President of the Indian Republic was due, the Prime Minister would have to accept defeat or choose any of his own men from outside Congress.

Dr. Ambedkar told the meeting that when Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai left the Congress, he had told Mr. Kidwai : “ Take people like Nehru with you and I am with you.”

Stressing the importance of having a strong opposition Dr. Ambedkar said no party should have unlimited power and it was bad for the people to remain idle and indifferent if that stage of affairs came into being.

The Socialist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation were fighting the elections for democratic socialism for freedom and equality.

He thought though they would not be able to form a Government, they would be able to form a strong opposition.

“Numbers do not matter. It is the quality of opposition that counts”, he added. He appealed to the people to elect at least the best, if not all, of the candidates put up by the Socialists and the Federation, so that the opposition might be of good quality.

Mr. Asoka Mehta could not address the gathering as he was unwell and Mr. M. Harris spoke in his stead. He declared that interested parties had tried to misinterpret the alliance of the Socialists with the Federation.

Earlier, processions from a number of constituencies, from Kurla to Colaba were taken out and they converged on Shivaji Park. The two main processions started from Byculla Bridge and the Docks area.”¹



¹. The National Standard, dated 26th November 1951.

PURITY OF ADMINISTRATION IS NECESSARY FOR WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered a speech in the joint and crowded meeting of the Praja Socialist Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation, held in the Sir Cawasji Jehangir Hall, Bombay, Fort on 26th November 1951. Mr. Purushottam Trikamdas presided over meeting.

The charge that the Nehru Government and the Congress Party had failed to give to the people, a pure and incorruptible administration was made on Monday by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, former Law Minister of the Government of India.

The Congress had been rightly accused of not providing food and clothing to the people. But there was something greater and important than food and clothing which the present Government had failed to give to the people. That was pure administration, free from corruption, bribery, nepotism and favouritism.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar supported his charge by citing several instances of corruption and bribery in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madras and asked the Congress High Command why it did not think it fit to institute an enquiry into the allegations made against the Ministries of those states by Congress legislators.

It seemed extraordinary to him that the Congress Party which ruled the country, should be so indifferent to its own reputation, honour and integrity and should not appoint an enquiry committee to go into these charges made against the Government by its own members.

He stated that it might be difficult to provide food and clothing to the people but why should it be difficult to give the people a pure Government, he asked. It was a matter which entirely rested in the hands of the Government. If the Government was determined to make its administration fool-proof and knave-proof, nothing could have stood in its way. But really what stood in its way was the Congress itself, because it did not believe in purity of administration.

He was particularly pained at the statement made by Mr. Nehru, as President of the Congress, at the recent Delhi session in which he practically defended corruption prevailing in the country. Mr. Nehru had said that corruption in India was not such a great evil as would demand great attention.

He also referred to a storm raised against him by Congress members of Parliament for certain disqualification clauses for elections which he wanted to introduce into the Representation of the People's Act. He wanted black-marketeers and holders of permits and licences to be disqualified from contesting elections alongwith contractors. But he was forced to remove the clause because of strong opposition from Congress members. Another battle which he fought bitterly but lost in the end was in regard to expenses incurred during elections by parties.

"Is this conduct and attitude of the Congress compatible with the maintenance of purity of administration?" he queried, and said: "Nobody can have trust and faith in a party which plays fast and loose with the question of purity of administration."

Purity of administration was very necessary for the welfare of the people because the public was more concerned with how the law was administered and not with how the law was made.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that he had received several complaints alleging that Congress workers in the districts were influencing judicial officers.

Stressing the need for a strong opposition in India Dr. Ambedkar called upon the Congress to allow other political parties to function as opposition parties and not to suppress the political voice of the people. To the moneyed class he uttered a note of warning not to subscribe to the funds of the Congress Party.

The former Law Minister made a reference to the accusation which he alleged, had been made by Mr. S. K. Patil, that he (Dr. Ambedkar) was ungrateful because he had resigned from the Cabinet. Mr. Patil seemed to have funny notions about

gratefulness, he said and quoted a citation from Irish philosopher which read : “ No man can be grateful at the cost of his honour. No woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity. And no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty.”

Gratefulness had its own limitations. Dr. Ambedkar said, He did not want to be a slave in the Government of India.

Replying to the claim made by Mr. Patil, that it was through his efforts that Dr. Ambedkar found a place in the Central Government, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was one of the greatest surprises of his life how he got into the Cabinet, particularly when the Congress was determined and practically vowed not to permit him to enter even the portals of the Constituent Assembly.¹

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¹ The Times of India, dated 27th November 1951.

ALLIANCE TO OPPOSE

“ Mr. Ashok Mehta, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, told an election meeting at Chowpatty on Sunday the 23rd December 1951, that the Party’s alliance with the Scheduled Castes’ Federation has created a new force.

He was followed by Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Federation, who said the alliance was merely to oppose the Congress.

Mr. Mehta attacked Mr. Nehru’s criticism of the alliance.

Dr. Ambedkar said the Congress had done nothing during the last four years.

Several processions from different parts of the city joined the public meeting at Chowpatty.”¹

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¹. Bharat, dated 24th December 1951.

I ALWAYS HAVE THE INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY AT HEART

“ The renowned University of Columbia of America in an unequivocal decision in 1950 decided to honour Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by conferring a prestigious degree of LL. D. upon him for his pivotal role in drafting the constitution of the independent India. Dr. Ambedkar's joy knew no bounds to get this news from his alma mater from where he had obtained M. A. and Ph. D. degrees in 1915 and 1917 respectively. But there were many problems before the newly formed Government of India. These were constitutional problems and had to be solved by the expertize of Dr. Ambedkar. Knowing his responsibility Dr. Ambedkar could not accept the invitation. Moreover, his ill health would not allow him to go to America. He, most humbly, informed the University about his inability to attend the ceremony. General Eisenhower was the President of the Columbia University at that time who later served America as her President. He was going to preside over the convocation function. The University was ready to award the degree in absentia. But Dr. Ambedkar informed the University that he would come in one or two years to accept the degree personally. The University was happy to honour this illustrious son of India and conceding to his request decided to hold the function on June 5, 1952. The list of the proud recipients of the degrees in which figured the name of Dr. Ambedkar appeared in the fourth week of May. There was a flood of letters by his friends, fans and well wishers congratulating him on his grand success. Even, Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India, took pride in his achievement and congratulated Dr. Ambedkar with the following words. In his letter, he said,



2, King Edward Road,
New Delhi.
26th May 1952.

My dear Dr. Ambedkar,

I am very pleased to see in the papers that the Columbia University is conferring on you the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. It is an appropriate recognition for your great work in regard to our Constitution. My warmest congratulations.

There will be no time limit today and tomorrow for the first hour or so. So, if you wish to speak on the General Budget, it will be convenient if you do so today or tomorrow forenoon.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- S. Radhakrishnan.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar,
Member, Council of States,
Parliament House, New Delhi."
4001-4003.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's reply,

"26, Alipore Road,
Delhi,
the 27th May 1952.

Dear Dr. Radhakrishnan,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 26th May 1952 containing your congratulations on the project of the Columbia University to confer an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws on me.

I am very glad to say there were at least some in India who are prepared to appreciate the honour that is being done to me.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- B. R. Ambedkar,

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan,
Vice-President of India,
New Delhi."

Pollux praised Dr. Ambedkar for his achievement in the following words published in the Illustrated Weekly of India, dated June 15, 1952.

“ THESE NEWS MAKE NEWS ”

“ Whether in office or out of it, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is always news. Earlier in the week he once again hit the headlines with a ruthless speech in the Upper House, in which he attacked the Government's Kashmir policy towards the formulation of which he is supposed to have taken a share as Minister in the last Cabinet. The Treasury Benches will, no doubt, have a sign of relief at the news that the formidable Doctor is going out of the country on June 1. He is flying to New York to receive the Honorary Degree of LL.D. from his old University, Columbia.

He should have received this degree three years ago, at the hands of General Eisenhower who was then President of the University, but Cabinet responsibilities and, later, electioneering came in the way of the trips and the university was reluctant to confer it in absentia. Dr. Ambedkar will be visiting the United States of America, after 20 years. He told Pollux that Mrs. Ambedkar was not accompanying him on the trip for lack of an adequate supply of dollars. While in New York he plans to enter a clinic for medical treatment.” [Column 4 of the article by “ Pollux ” in the Illustrated Weekly of India, Sunday, 1-6-1952, page 8].

Dr. Ambedkar was to leave for New York on the night of Sunday, the 1st of June 1952. His friends, well wishers, fans and the employees of People's Education Society arranged a Grand Dinner in his honour, on the night of Saturday the 31st May 1952, the previous day of his departure at specious lawns of the Cricket Club of India. Many eminent personalities like Principal Dr. V. S. Patankar, the Secretary of People's Education Society, Mr. K. V. Chitre, Mr. Prabhakar Padhye, Mr. B. H. Rao, Mr. W. Alfred, Chairman of the Union of Journalist graced the dinner by their august presence. On this occasion, Patankar said that many among Indians feared that

Dr. Ambedkar would launch a scathing attack on Untouchability in India during his stay in America to draw the attention of the world to this unjust practice and thus would expose the Indian Government's failure in tackling the problem. But this fear was baseless. Because Dr. Ambedkar was an Indian first and would do nothing disgraceful to damage the reputation of his motherland.

Dr. Ambedkar while expressing his gratitude towards all said that he had not arranged any lecture programme in the United States and therefore no one need be under the apprehension that he would say anything harsh there about this country.

Dr. Ambedkar said that although it was said that he possesses a vitriolic temperament and had on many occasions crossed the floors and come into conflict with those in authority he had not on a single occasion been a traitor to the country. He always had the interest of the country at heart. Even at the Round Table Conference, he said, he had been '200 miles ahead of Mahatma Gandhi' so far as the interests of India were concerned". (The Times of India, Monday, 2-6-1952, Page 7, Column 3).

While throwing light, on this dinner party hosted in honour of Dr. Ambedkar a columnist of 'The Evening News of India' observed thus :

" A GREAT MAN "

It is an irony of fate—to quote Principal U. S. Patankar of Siddhartha College—that none of the Indian Universities has so far taken the initiative in honouring Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, one of the Chief Architects of our Constitution, by conferring an honorary degree on him. Even Bombay University of which Dr. Ambedkar was an alumnus, has been "slow and halting"

It has fallen to the credit of Columbia University, to which also the learned doctor was a student, of being the first to honour Dr. Ambedkar by conferring on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Dr. Ambedkar left for the United States last Monday by a T. W. A. plane. He will stay in the States for only a few weeks during which he hopes to get some treatment for his legs.

Dr. Patankar and Mr. Chitre, of Siddharth College, gave a dinner at the C. C. I. to Dr. Ambedkar on the eve of his departure. No one has ever seriously questioned Dr. Ambedkar's patriotism, and he made it plain during an after-dinner talk that it was never his intention to run down India during his stay in the United States.

During an interesting conversation, the doctor revealed that he liked Maulana Azad's Hindi very much. "If that is the type of Hindi which we are asked to follow, it will be a very good thing, and not the highly Sanskritised kind," Dr. Ambedkar said adding that the Maulana's Hindi hardly contained any Arabic or Persian words nor any Sanskritised expressions and yet was chaste, polished and dignified.

The plane carrying Dr. Ambedkar took off from Bombay Santacruz Airport around mid-night. He was carrying an overcoat on his arm, a hat on his head and had put on a black neck tie. He bade 'Good bye' to the people with his known smile. All this has been captured in a photograph published on the front page of Free Press Bulletin of June 2, 1952.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HONOURS DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

New York, June 6, 1952. Columbia University Yesterday hailed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as "one of India's leading citizens—a great social reformer and a valient upholder of human rights," in awarding him an honorary degree at its 198th commencement exercises.

Dr. Ambedkar received the honorary doctorate of laws and letters before the large crowd assembled to watch 6,848 graduates of Columbia's 17 schools and colleges received degrees for completing courses of study. Honoured, among with Dr. Ambedkar were Mr. Laster B. Pearson, Canadian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Daniel Mornnet, the noted French literary historian, and eight American citizens." (The Times of India, Saturday 7-6-1952, page 6)

The news appeared with a photograph of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mr. Wallace Stevens, a poet and Executive from Hartford, Connecticut who were honoured with the honorary degree of letters, "Doctor of Laws".

“ DOCTOR OF LAWS ”

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Columbia University, New York, on June 5, is seen above with a another receipt. Mr. Wallace Stevens, poet and Insurance Executive from Hartford, Connecticut, who received the honorary degree of Letters.”

(The Times of India, 13-6-1952, with a photograph of Wallace Stevens and Ambedkar).

The citation of this degree of Doctor of Laws is both in Latin and English and it was read out by Hon'ble Grayson Kirk, the then Vice-President and provost of the university. The citation is as follows :

CITATION

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR, LL. D.

Born in India and schooled there under heavy hard-ships : B. A. of the University of Bombay at twenty and for three years a graduate student in this University, receiving the doctorate in political science, subsequently a student of the Inns of Court and the University of London obtaining a doctorate in economics ; for the past three decades as barrister. University professor and member of the legislative council as a framer of the Constitution, member of the cabinet and of the Council of State, one of India's leading citizens, a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights.

In the exercise of the authority conferred upon me by the Trustees, I gladly admit you to the degree of Doctor of laws, *honoris causa*, in this University and confer upon you all the rights and privileges which attach thereto, in token whereof I hand you this diploma.

Sd/- Grayson Kirk,

June 5, 1952

Vice-President and Provost.

**SURATORS UNIVERSITATIS COLUMBIAE NEO
EBORACENSIS**

**OMNIBUS ET SINGULIS QUORUM INTEREST SALUTEM
HIS LETTER'S TESTAMUR NOS UNANIMI CONSENSU**

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar

AD GRADUM

DOCTORIS IN LEGIBUS

**HONORIS CAUSA PROVEXISSE EIQUE OMNIA IURA ET
PRIVILEGIA QUAE AD ISTUM ATTINENT DEDISSE ET
CONCESSISSE IN CVIVS REI PLENIVS TESTI MONIUM
SIGILLO HVIVS UNIVERSITTIS ET PRAESIDIS
CHIROGRAPHO DIPLOMA HOCCE MUNIENDUM
CURAVIMVS DATUM NOVI EBORACI DIE**

**MENSIS IVNII
ANNOQUE DOMINI
MILLESIMO NONGENTESM
QUINQUAGESIMO SECUNDO**

**Seal of the University
of columbia. ¹**

**QUINTO,
Sd/-Grayson Kirk,
PROPR AE SES**



¹: Khairmode, Vol. 10, Pp 280-288.

ALL MY ATTENTION IS CONCENTRATED ON BUILDING OF HALL FOR FEDERATION

“It was decided to hold a gathering of ‘Untouchables’ on Sunday, the 28th September 1952 at 4 p.m. on Nare Park Ground at Bombay. (Opposit to GIPR work shop). It was also decided that Dr. Ambedkar would address it. Accordingly a hand bill was issued jointly duly signed by J. G. Bhatankar, Secretary Scheduled Castes Federation and Mumbai Municipal Kamgar Sangh; L. F. Hindlekar, General Secretary Mahar Dnyati Panchayat Sangh Mumbai; S. A. Upshyam, Secretary Scheduled Castes Improvement Trust and M. M. Sasalekar, J. O. C. Samata Sainik Dal.

The ground was overcrowded by the ‘Untouchables’. Exactly at 5.30 p. m. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar came to attend the gathering. The ‘Untouchables’ greeted him with thunderous applause.

After introductory remarks, Upshyam requested Dr. Ambedkar to address the gathering.”¹

At present Dr. Ambedkar said, all his attention was concentrated on the building of a hall for the Federation. He was leaving for Delhi next week and would not return for some days. He had a fear that his absence from Bombay, the work of swelling the fund would not progress.

While making an appeal for generous donations from members of his community, Dr. Ambedkar said that the common people would support him in the case.

In the last few months, a sum of Rs. 22,000/- had been collected. Dr. Ambedkar had once thought that a hall had to be built even if it necessitated raising a loan. Now, he had changed his mind and the hall had to be constructed out of the funds donated by members themselves.”²



¹ : Janata, 4th October 1952.

² : The Times of India, dated 29th September 1952.

RECOGNISE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MODERN WORLD

On December 16, 1952,* Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the students' annual gathering at Elphinstone College on " the problems of modern students".

He appealed to the students to reorganize university education to meet the requirements of the modern world, and to make the University a place for knowledge and not a centre for training clerks."¹



* As per ' Janata ' the date of fuction was 15th December 1952.—Editors.

¹ : Keer, P. 445.

CONDITIONS PRECEDENT FOR THE SUCCESSFUL WORKING OF DEMOCRACY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was invited by the Members of the Poona District Law Library on 22nd December 1952 for :

- (i) Unveiling the portrait of late Shri L. R. Gokhale.
- (ii) For declaring open the collections of books donated by Shri A. B. Sethna and Shri H. V. Tulpule, two senior members of the Bar and preserved as separate sections in the Law Library.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mrs. S. Ambedkar were kind enough to accept this invitation.

Shri P. C. Bhat, District and Sessions Judge, Poona who as the President of the Poona District Law Library presided over the function.

Sangeet Kalanidhi Master Krishnarao Fulambrikar sang a welcome song in honour of Dr. and Mrs. Ambedkar. The welcome song was composed by one of our brother pleaders Shri S. G. Bhat.

The Vice-President Shri K. S. Choubal delivered a welcome speech.

Shri V. B. Gogate, Hon. Secretary read the report of the Library.

Shri B. D. Bal requested Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to unveil the portrait of the late Shri L. R. Gokhale and to declare open the sections of the books donated by Shri A. B. Sethna and H. V. Tulpule.

Then Dr. B.R. Ambedkar unveiled the portrait of late Shri L. R. Gokhale and also declared open the said sections.

On that occasion President Shri P. C. Bhat observed as follows :

"Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Bench and the Bar.

I have a pleasant function to perform and that is to request the Chief Guest to speak a few words on the subject of today. You will kindly excuse me for not making a long speech because of my ill-health. I now request the Chief Guest to address us on the subject."

Dr. Ambedkar's Address

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

When the invitation came, I wrote to your Secretary that I would very much like to know what are the subjects in which the members of this District Library are interested, because I may come here and speak on a subject in which they may have no interest. If so, the visit would be of no value either to you or to me. He was kind enough to send me a list of four subjects. He said "You can select anyone of them." I was in a hurry to reply to him and could not convey to him my actual decision as to what subject I would select. But I told him in a general way that I would select one of the four and if I did not select one of the four, I will not travel beyond the ambit of the four which he had prescribed. The one subject which attracted me which he had mentioned was Parliamentary Democracy, and I thought that that was a subject on which I might speak. The subject which I have selected is not Parliamentary Democracy, but something which is very closely associated with Parliamentary Democracy and which from my point of view, and I believe from the point of view of the country, is a very important subject. Now, the subject which I am going to speak to you this evening is according to my wording of the subject: "Conditions Precedent for the Successful Working of Democracy." What are the conditions precedent which must exist in order that the democratic form of Government may continue to work without any kind of hindrance. That is the subject on which I propose to make a few observations.

Setting for the Subject

Now, before I actually deal with the subject-matter I propose to make a few preliminary observations in order to provide, what I call, a setting for the subject.

The first preliminary observation I propose to make is this that democracy is always changing its form. We speak of democracy, but democracy is not always the same. The Greeks spoke of Athenian Democracy. But as everyone knows, the Athenian Democracy was as different from our modern democracy as chalk is from cheese. The Athenian Democracy consisted of people

50 per cent of whom were slaves. Only 50 per cent were free. The 50 per cent who formed slaves had no place in the Government at all. Surely our democracy is quite different from the Athenian Democracy.

The second thing to which I would like to draw your attention by a preliminary observation is that even in the same country democracy is not always the same. You take the history of England. Nobody can say that the English Democracy before the English Revolution of 1688 was the same as the English Democracy which came after the revolution of 1688. Nor can anyone say that the English Democracy as existed between 1688 and 1832 when the first Reform Bill was passed, is the same as the democracy that developed after the passing of the Act of 1832. Democracy keeps on changing its form.

The third thing that I would like to draw your attention is that democracy not only undergoes changes in form; democracy always undergoes changes in purposes. You take the ancient English Democracy. What was the purpose of that democracy? It was to curb the King, to prevent the King from exercising what we now in law call his prerogative rights. The King even went to the extent of saying that although parliament may be there, as an enactment making body, "I as a King have got the prerogative to make the law and my law shall prevail." It was this kind of autocracy of the King which made democracy to come into being.

Today what is the purpose of the democracy? *The purpose of modern democracy is not so much to put a curb on an autocratic King but to bring about the welfare of the people.* That is a distinct change in the purpose of democracy. You will therefore see that in the title which I have given to my subject, I have deliberately used the words "conditions precedent for the success of modern democracy."

Democracy Defined

Again what do we mean by democracy? Let us have a clear understanding before I proceed to my subject. Democracy has been defined, as you know, by various people, writers of political science and philosophers, sociologists and so on. I take only two for the

purpose of illustrating my point. I do not know whether any of you is acquainted with that famous book by Walter Bagehot on the English Constitution, the first modern attempt to give a clear picture of democracy. If you refer to that book of Walter Bagehot, his definition of democracy is "government by discussion." That is how he defines democracy. Take another illustration that is of Abraham Lincoln. In his famous Getisburg speech which he made after the conquest of the Southern States, he defined democracy as "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Well, many other definitions could be added in order to give an idea what people mean by democracy. Personally for myself, I define democracy in a different way, in a much more concrete way, I think. My definition of democracy is "*a form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed.*" That is my definition of democracy. If democracy can enable those who are running it to bring about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people and the people accept those changes without resorting to bloodshed, then I say that there is democracy. That is the real test. It is perhaps the severest test. But when you are judging the quality of a material, you must put it to the severest test. And this is how I propose to define democracy at any rate so far as today's address is concerned. Now, how can such a democracy be successful? This is the main subject matter of my address. Now, unfortunately there are no dogmas laid down by any of the authors who have written about this subject of democracy which can give us any idea in concrete, as to what are the conditions precedent according to their judgement to make democracy a success. One has to read history and as a result of reading history to find out the break-down period in democracy's life in the different parts of the world where it had functioned and come to one's own conclusion.

Condition No. I

The first condition which I think is a condition precedent for the successful working of the democracy is that there must be no glaring inequalities in the society. There must not be an oppressed class. There must not be a suppressed class. There must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all

the burdens to carry. Such a thing, such a division, such an organization of a society has within itself the germs of a bloody revolution, and perhaps it would be impossible for the democracy to cure them. Lincoln once said, although people have not understood his meaning, in the same Gatisburg's speech that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." He was of course referring to the conflict between the Southern States and the Northern States. He said, "If you of the Southern States and we of the Northern States are divided, we shall not be able to stand together when a foreign enemy comes." That was probably the meaning that he wanted to convey when he said that the house divided cannot stand. But I think that phrase of his or sentence of his is pregnant with much deeper meaning and it means, as I understand it, that the deep cleavages between class and class are going to be one of the greatest hindrances in the success of democracy. Because in democracy what happens? In democracy, everybody, even the oppressed, the suppressed, those who are deprived of their rights and those who carry the burden, they have the right to vote in the same way as those who have all the privileges, and probably those who are privileged are fewer than those who are unprivileged and since we adopt a majority rule as the rule of decision, it is quite possible that if the privileged few will not willingly and voluntarily surrender their privileges, then the distance between them and the lower orders will destroy democracy and bring into existence something quite different. There is, therefore, no doubt in my mind that if you examine the history of democracy in various parts of the world, you will find that one of the causes for the breakdown of democracy is the existence of these social cleavages.

Condition No. II

The second thing which a successful working of democracy requires is the existence of opposition. Now, I have seen many people not only in this country but in England condemning the party system. I was just recently reading, just before I came, a small little book published by the Hansard Society on the party system in England and here is one whole chapter devoted to this question whether the party system is a good system and should be tolerated. There is a variety of views. Now, it seems to me that all

those who are against the party system and who must be taken also on that very account to be against opposition, seem completely to misunderstand what democracy means. What does democracy mean? I am not defining it. I am asking a functional question. It seems to me that democracy means a veto of power. Democracy is a contradiction of hereditary authority or autocratic authority. Democracy means that at some stage somewhere there must be a veto on the authority of those who are ruling the country. In autocracy there is no veto. The King once elected is there with his inherent or divine right to rule. He does not have to go before his subject at the end of every five years to ask them, "Do you think I am a good man? Do you think I have done well during the last five years? If so, will you re-elect me?" There is no veto on the part of anybody on the power of the King. But in democracy we have provided, that at every five years those who are in authority must go to the people and ask whether in the opinion of the people they are well qualified to be entrusted with power and authority to look after their interest, to mould their destiny, to defend them. That is what I call veto. Now, a democracy is not satisfied with a quinquennial veto that the Government should go at the end of five years only to the people and in the meantime there should be nobody to question the authority of the Government. Democracy requires that not only that the Government should be subject to the veto, long-term veto of five years, at the hands of the people, but there must be an immediate veto. There must be people in the parliament immediately ready there and then to challenge the Government. Now, if you understand what I am saying, democracy means that nobody has any perpetual authority to rule, but that rule is subject to sanction by the people and can be challenged in the house itself. You will see how important it is to have an oppositon. Opposition means that the Government is always on the anvil. The Government must justify every act that it does to those of the people who do not belong to its party. Unfortunately, in our country all our newspapers, for one reason or other, I believe, it is the revenue from advertisements, have given far more publicity to the Government than to the opposition, because you cannot get any revenue from the opposition. They get revenue from the Government and you find columns after columns of speeches reeled out by members of the

ruling party in the daily newspapers and the speeches made by the opposition are probably put somewhere on the last page in the last column. I am not criticising what is democracy. I am saying what is the condition precedent for a democracy. *The opposition is a condition precedent for democracy.* But do you know that in England not only is the opposition recognised, but the leader of the opposition is paid a salary by the Government in order to run the opposition. He gets a secretary, he gets a small staff of stenographers and writers, he has a room in the House of Commons where he does his business. In the same way, you will find that in Canada the leader of the opposition gets a salary in the way as a Prime Minister does, because in both these countries democracy feels that there must be someone to show whether the Government is going wrong. And this must be done incessantly and perpetually and that is why they do not mind spending money on the leader of the opposition.

Condition No. III

I think there is a **third condition** which may also be called a condition precedent for the success of democracy and that is **equality in law and administration**. One need not at this stage delite too much on equality before the law, although there might be cases here and there when there is no equality before the law. But what is important is equality of treatment in administration. It is quite possible for good many of you to imagine or to recall cases where a party Government is carrying on the administration for the benefit of the members of the party. At any rate, I can recall a great many instances of this sort. Suppose there is a law which says that nobody shall deal in a particular commodity without a licence. Nobody can quarrel with that law because it is universal. There is no discrimination in that particular piece of legislation. But let us go further and see what happens when a man goes to a particular officer or to the Minister with an application for licence in trading in a particular commodity. I do not know, it is quite possible again that probably the Minister may first look at his hat. What sort of a coloured hat he is wearing? If he is wearing a hat which appeals to him and it assures him that he is a party man and another man goes with another sort of dress or belonging to another party and in making his decision the licence is given to the first and refused to

the second, although both of them on merits are equally qualified to have that licence, then obviously this is a discrimination in administration and there is no equity. Of course the question of licence, i.e. the granting of this privilege and that privilege is perhaps small thing and affects only a very small class of people. But let us go further and see what would happen if this kind of discrimination enters administration. Supposing a member of a certain party is being prosecuted for a certain offence for which there is abundant evidence, and suppose the head of the party in that particular area goes to the District Magistrate and tells him that it is not right for him to prosecute this man because he belongs to his party and says, "well, if you don't do it, I shall refer the matter to the Minister and get you transferred from this place to some other place." You can just imagine what chaos and injustice would result in administration. The sort of a thing which used to happen in the United States which is called a Spoil System, that is to say, when one party came in office, it removed all the employees that were employed by their predecessor including even the clerks and the peons and they filled their vacancies by those gentlemen who helped the new party to go in power. The United States as a matter of fact, had no administration worth speaking of for a number of years. Subsequently, they themselves realised that this was not helpful to democracy. They abolished this Spoil System. In England, in order that administration should remain pure, impartial, away from politics and policy, they have made a distinction between what is called political offices and civil offices. The civil service is permanent. It serves all the parties whichever is in office and carries out the administration without any kind of interference from the Minister. Such a thing at one time did exist in our country when the British were here. I recall very clearly an incident in my own career as a member of the Government of India. You perhaps will recollect that every Viceroy has got in Delhi some street or club named after him. The only Governor General who does not get his name attached to some street or institution is Lord Linlithgow. His Private Secretary was my friend. I was then in charge of P. W. D. and there were plenty of works I was in charge of. He came and quite said to me "My dear Dr. could you do something for naming some institution or work after the name of Lord Linlithgow?" He

said it is looking very glaring that everybody's name is there but not his. I said "I will consider." I was then discussing the construction of a barrage over Jamuna in order to provide water to the city of Delhi in summer, because it goes dry in summer, I told my Secretary who was a European by name Priar. And I said, "Mr. Priar look here, this is what the Secretary to the Governor General has said to me. Do you think we can do something?" What do you think was his reply? His reply was "Sir, we must not do any such thing at all." Such a thing at any rate in this country to do would be quite impossible. For any officer to say something which is contrary to the wishes of the Minister is, to my mind, utterly impossible. But in those days it was quite possible, because we too in India like Great Britain had made that wise decision that administration must not be interfered with by the Government, and that the function of the Government was to lay down policy but not to interfere and not to make any discrimination. This is very fundamental and I am afraid we had already departed from that and may completely abnegate and abolish the thing we have had so far.

Condition No. IV

The fourth condition precedent, in my judgement, for the successful working of democracy is the observance of constitutional morality. Many people seem to be very enthusiastic about the Constitution. Well, I am afraid, I am not. I am quite prepared to join that body of people who want to abolish the Constitution, at any rate to redraft it. But what we forget is that we have a Constitution which contains legal provisions, only a skeleton. The flesh of that skeleton is to be found in what we call constitutional morality. However, in England it is called the conventions of the constitution and people must be ready to observe the rules of the game. Let me give you one or two illustrations which come to my mind at this moment. You remember when the 13 American colonies rebelled, their leader was Washington. It is really a very inadequate way of defining his position in the American life of that day merely to say that he was a leader. To the American people Washington was God. If you read his life and history, he was made the first President of the United States after the constitution was drafted. After his term was over, what happened? He refused to stand for the second time.

I have not the least doubt in my mind that if Washington had stood ten times one after the other for the Presidentship, he would have been elected unanimously without a rival. But he stepped down the second time. When he was asked why, he said, "My dear people, you have forgotten the purpose for which we made this constitution. We made this constitution because we did not want a hereditary monarchy and we did not want a hereditary ruler or a dictator. If after abandoning and swerving away from the allegiance of the English King, you come to this country and stick to worship me year after year and term after term what happens to your principles? Can you say that you have rightly rebelled against the authority of the English king when you are substituting me in his place? He said, "Even if your royalty and fidelity to me compels you to plead that I should stand a second time, I as one who enunciated that principle that we should not have hereditary authority, must not fall a prey to your emotion." Ultimately, they prevailed upon him to stand at least a second time. And he did. And the third time when they approached him, he spurned them away. Let me give you another illustration. You know Windsor Edward the VIII whose serial story has now been published in the Times of India. I had gone to the Round Table Conference and there was a great controversy going on there as to whether the King should be allowed to marry the woman whom he wanted to marry, especially when he was prepared to marry her in a morganstic marriage, so that she may not be a queen or whether the British people should deny him even that personal right and force him to abdicate. Mr Baldwin was of course against the King's marriage. He would not allow him, and said, "If you do not listen to me, you will have to go." Our friend Mr. Churchill was the friend of Edward the VIII and was encouraging him. At that time the Labour Party was in the opposition. They had no majority and I remember very well the Labour Party people considered whether they could not make capital out of this issue and defeat Mr. Baldwin; because there was a large number of conservatives who in their loyalty wanted to support the King; and I remember the late Prof. Laski writing a series of articles in the 'Herald' condemning any such move on the part of the Labour party. He said, "By our convention we have always agreed that the king

must accept the advice of the Prime Minister and if he does not accept the advice of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister shall force his ejection." That being our convention, it would be wrong on our part to defeat Mr. Baldwin, on an issue which increases the authority of the King. And the Labour Party listened to his advice and did nothing of the kind. They said, they must observe the rules of the game. If you read English history, you will find many such illustrations where the party leaders have had before them many temptations to do wrong to their opponents in office or in opposition by clutching at an issue which gave them temporary power, but which they refused to fall a prey to, because they knew that they would damage the constitution and damage democracy.

There is one other thing which I think is very necessary in the working of democracy and it is this that in the name of democracy there must be no tyranny of the majority over the minority. The minority must always feel safe that although the majority is carrying on the Government, the minority is not being hurt, or the minority is not being hit below the belt. This is a thing which is very greatly respected in the House of Commons. Good many of you must be remembering the results of elections in England in 1931 when Mr. Ramsay Mac Donald left the Labour Party and formed the National Government. When the election came, the Labour Party which I think numbered somewhere about 150 or so, had only 50 members out of 650 with Mr. Baldwin as the Prime Minister. I was then there. But I have never heard of a single instance of this small minority of 50 members belonging to the Labour Party under the huge majority of the conservatives ever complaining that they were denied their due rights of speech, or opposition or making motions of any kind as you probably know. You take our own Parliament. I am not justifying what the members of the opposition are doing by constantly bringing in motions of censure or adjournment motions. It is not a very happy thing to work in parliament to be constantly dunning these adjournment motions. All the same, you must have noticed that there is hardly any motion, whether of adjournment or censure which has been admitted for the debate. It surprises me considerably. In my reading of the English parliamentary debates I have very seldom come

across a case where a demand for adjournment has been refused either by the Speaker, provided of course it is an order by the Government. When I was a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, there were a few of our friends Mr. Morarji, Mr. Munshi and Mr. Kher and others who were in office. They never allowed a single motion of adjournment to be discussed. Either our friend Mr. Mavlankar who was then the Speaker helped them by ruling it out or as he admitted, the Minister objected to it. You know what happens when a Minister objects? When a Minister objects, the man who proposes the adjournment motion has to produce 30 or 40 people, whatever the quota is. It may be that if Government were constantly to oppose adjournment motions of the small community which is represented in the house by a group of few members such as 4, 5 or 6, such small minorities can never get a chance to ventilate their grievances. What happens is that these minorities develop a contempt for parliamentary people and develop a revolutionary spirit something unconstitutional. It is therefore necessary that when democracy is working, the majority on which it is based, must not act in a tyrannical manner.

One other point I will refer and then close. I think that democracy does require the functioning of moral order in society. Somehow, our political scientists have never considered this aspect of democracy. Ethics is something separate from politics. You may learn politics and you may know nothing about ethics as though politics can work without ethics. To my mind it is an astounding proposition. After all, in democracy what happens? Democracy is spoken of as a free Government. And what do we mean by free Government? Free Government means that in vast aspects of social life people are left free to carry on without interference of law, or if law has to be made, then the law maker expects that society will have enough morality in it to make the law a success. The only person who, I think, has referred to this aspect of democracy is Laski. In one of his books he has very categorically stated that the moral order is always taken for granted in democracy. If there is no moral order, democracy will go to pieces as it is going now probably in our own country.

The last thing that I refer to is that democracy requires 'public conscience.' There is no doubt about it that although there is injustice in every country, the injustice is not equally spread. There are some where the impact of injustice is very small. There are some against whom the impact is very great. And there are some who are absolutely crushed under the burden of injustice. One might very easily cite the case of Jews in England. They were the people who suffered certain injustice which the Christians never did. What happened was that the Jews alone had to struggle in order to get this injustice removed. But the English Christians never helped them. In fact, they liked it. The only man who helped the Jews in England was the King. This may be extraordinary. But the reason also is extraordinary and the reason is this: Under the old Christian law the children of the Jews could not inherit the property of the father for no other reason except that he was a Jew and not a Christian, and the King being the residuary legatee of the State received the property of a dead Jew. Now the king liked that sort of thing. He was very happy. When the children of the dead Jew went to the King in application the King handed over to them a little bit of the property of their dead father and kept the rest for himself. But as I said, no English man ever helped the Jews, and the Jews continued to struggle for their liberation. This is the result of what is called "public conscience." Public conscience means conscience which becomes agitated at every wrong, no matter who is the sufferer and it means that everybody whether he suffers that particular wrong or not, is prepared to join him in order to get him relieved. You take South Africa, the most recent example. Well, the people who are suffering there are the Indians. Are not they? The white people are not suffering yet you find this Reverend Scott who is a white man doing his level best and in order to get this injustice removed. Recently, I have been reading that a large number of young boys and girls belonging to the white race are also joining the struggle of the Indians in South Africa. That is called "public conscience." I do not want to shock you, but sometimes I feel how forgetful we are. We are talking about South Africa. I have been wondering within myself whether we who are talking so much against segregation and so on do not have South Africa in every village. There is; we have only to go and see. There is South Africa

everywhere in the village and yet I have very seldom found anybody not belonging to the scheduled class taking up the cause of the scheduled class and fighting, and why? Because there is no "public conscience." Myself and my India is the only world within which I am bound. If this sort of thing happens, the minority which is suffering from injustice gets no help from others for the purpose of getting rid of this injustice. It again develops a revolutionary mentality which puts democracy in danger. Now, as I said, what I have said is not a series of dogmas which have been worked out by any political scientists, but the result of what is impressed upon me as a result of reading the political histories of various countries, and I believe that these are the most essential conditions for the purpose of preserving democracy.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have no idea what has been the underlying purpose or motive which led you to give me this invitation. It might be that you wanted to add something to your programme. I hope I have discharged that function. But so far as I am concerned, I have no doubt about it that the subject about which I have spoken this evening, to my mind, is a subject of the greatest importance to this nation. We have somehow developed the idea that we have got independence. The Britishers have gone. We have got a constitution which provides for democracy. Well what more do we want? We cannot rest as we say on our ears, and do nothing more. Let me warn you against this kind of smug feeling that with the making of the constitution our task is done. It is not done. It has only begun. You must remember that democracy is not a plant which grows everywhere. It has grown in America. It has grown in England. To some extent it has grown in France. Yes these are examples by which we can take a certain amount of courage to ourselves to see what has happened elsewhere. You must be remembering that as a result of the first European War and the break-up of the Austria-Hungarian empire, Wilson created, on the basis of self determination, small nationalities independent of Austria. They all began with democratic constitution, democratic government and they had also fundamental rights provided in their constitution which was made obligatory for them to have the Peace Treaty of Versailles. My friends, what has happened to that

democracy? Do you see any trace of it there now? It has all gone. It has all vanished. They are probably under the dominance or surveillance of other countries. There is no democracy left. Take some of the most recent examples. Syria had got a democratic government. After a few years there was a military rebellion and the Commander-in-Chief of Syria became the ruler of Syria and democracy vanished in air. Take another example. What happened in Egypt ? There too, they had been a democratic government beginning right from 1922 for 30 years. In one night Faruk had to leave and Nagib became the dictator of Egypt and he abolished the Constitution.

With all these examples before us, I think we ought to be very cautious and very considerate regarding our own future. You ought to consider whether we ought not to take some very positive steps in order to remove some of the stones and the boulders which are lying in our path in order to make our democracy safe. If, as a result of these few observations I have made, I have effected in you a consciousness that this is a problem on which we cannot afford to sleep, I think I would thank myself for the work I have done. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you long and I thank for the kind attention with which you have listened to what I have said. ”¹

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¹ : Booklet Printed by D. D. Gangal, Lokasangraha Press, 624 Sadashiv Peth, Poona 2 and Published by V. B. Gogate, LL. B., Pleader, Hon. Secretary Poona District Law Library, Poona 5.

KNOWLEDGE IS THE FOUNDATION OF MAN'S LIFE

On December 24, 1952, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the annual gathering of the students of the Rajaram College, Kolhapur. In the course of his speech he observed :

“ Knowledge is the foundation of a man's life and every effort must be made to maintain the intellectual stamina of a student and arouse his intellect.” He asked the students to develop their thinking power and make use of the knowledge they had gained.

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¹ : Keer, Pp. 445-446.

WOMEN LEADERS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE SOCIAL PROGRESS OF WOMEN

The women organisations of Kolhapur presented an address to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on 25th December 1952. The programme was arranged at Rajaram theatre. Large number of women and men were present for this programme. Mrs. Vimlabai Bagal made an introductory speech and read the address. Various women organisations welcomed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mrs. Maisaheb Ambedkar, Major Dadasaheb Nimbalkar also welcomed Dr. Ambedkar and Mrs. Ambedkar.

Replying to their address Dr. B. R. Ambedkar referred to the Hindu Code Bill and said,¹

“None of the prominent Indian women leaders were really interested in the social progress of women and stated that the Hindu Code Bill was now just like milk spoiled by mixture with a bitter acid. He added that if they wanted to have the Hindu Code Bill passed, they should find two fat women to fast.”²

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¹ : Janata, dated 3rd January 1953.

² : Keer, P. 446.

..... I SHALL TAKE STERN MEASURES

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressing a rally of 50,000 people* under the auspices of the Belgaum district branch of the Federation, at Nipani, on December 25th, 1952 said,

“ The misery, starvation, and squalor of the backward classes would bring dreadful results, and recalled the French and Russian revolutions.

He warned the ruling party that if the lot of the backward classes was not improved by the next elections, the Scheduled Castes Federation would take stern measures, which might upset the Government, and anarchy might follow.

“ I shall wait for two more years, or even till the next elections, for the alleviation of the misery of my people, and if a new deal is not forthcoming through negotiations, I shall take stern measures,” he added.

He refuted Mr. Nehru's statement at Nagpur recently that there was no Untouchability in India.

Elections Losses

The election reversals of the Scheduled Castes Federation candidates were not due to any weakness in the organisation, but due to lack of companions.

He would abandon politics if anybody could prove that the organisation was faulty. Its candidates secured hundred per cent votes from the Scheduled Castes people.

Earlier, Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of the Federation, who presided over the meeting, announced that the Working Committee of the Federation would meet in Delhi in February..... PTI.¹

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* : Keer, P. 446.

¹ : The National Standard, dated 27th December, 1952.

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY HONOURED

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

As Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of the Constitution of India rendered yeomen services to the country. His work was acknowledged by Columbia University, America where he was a student. Columbia was the first University which conferred L. L. D. on Dr. Ambedkar in a special convocation. Through out the Country only Osmania University Hyderabad Dn. has conferred D. Lit. (Doctor of Literature) on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on 12th January 1953.

On the eve of this convocation Deccan Chronicle, Hyderabad Dn. in its issue dated 13th January 1953 stated,

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar described as one of the ablest lawyers and the champion of the Downtroddens who had taken the main burden of framing the Indian Constitution. ”

“ Procedure for the Convocation, Osmania University, Monday 12th January 1953.”

“ The Chancellor shall say :

“ This Convocation of Osmania University has been called to confer Honorary Degrees on (1) Dr. S. Radha Krishnan, Vice-President of India , (2) Shri M. K. Vellodi, (3) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and also to confer Degree upon the candidates who have been certified of these Degrees, Let them now be presented.”

(7) The Vice-Chancellor will then read the citations and present the above persons.

(8) At the end of each citation, the Chancellor shall present the degree and say :—

“ By virtue of the authority vested in me as Chancellor of the Osmania University, I admit you to the degree of..... Honoris Causa on account of your eminent position and attainments. ”

The Citation about Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stated in the para 8 is as follows :—

“ Mr. Chancellor,

I have the honour to present you Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Literature Honoris Causa.

Born in 1893, Dr. Ambedkar was educated at Satara and Bombay. After Graduating from the Bombay University, he went to the United States of America, for further studies, and received the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1917 at the young age of 24. After returning to India he served for some time as Finance Minister of the Baroda State and later as professor of Political Economy at Sydenham College, Bombay. Again, he went abroad, this time to England and enrolled himself for the Doctorate degree in Science at the London School of Economics. His, treatise, entitled 'The Problem of the Rupee' was acclaimed by Economist the World over.

The political career had started early, but his legislative career started when he entered the Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1926. He gave evidence before the Lothian Committee on Indian Franchise; Royal Commission on Indian Currency and many other important Committees and Commissions. Dr. Ambedkar has been a staunch supporter of all the down-trodden people from the beginning of his career. Such people evoked his sympathy and he became the Founder-President of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation. He was invited to attend the Round Table Conference at London (1930-1932) to represent the scheduled Castes.

Dr. Ambedkar held the high office of Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1942-46. In 1947 when India became an independent country, he was taken in the Cabinet as Law Member. The responsibility of framing the India Constitution devolved upon him and the part played by him in this matter is well known.

Dr. Ambedkar is a voracious reader. He knows seven languages. He is an author of distinction and published several books. 'What Congress and Gandhi Have Done For Untouchables'; 'Annihilation of Caste'; 'Federation Vs. Freedom'; 'Pakistan and Partition of India'; 'Ranade and Gandhi'; etc. are among them.

Mr. Chancellor, in presenting Dr. Ambedkar, I am presenting a person of great eminence, high attainments and distinguished services, one of the ablest lawyers, a preeminent legislator, a champion of the backward and down-trodden people of India. I request you now to confer the Degree of Doctor of Literature Honoris Causa on Shri B. R. Ambedkar.'

Honourary Degree conferred on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is as follow :

Osmania University
The Degree
of
Doctor of Literature
Honoris Causa
Has Been Conferred At The Convocation Upon
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

In recognition of his Eminent Position And Attainments.

Hyderabad-Deccan.

January 12, 1953.

Chancellor

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**IF BUDDHIST GOSPEL IS NOT ADOPTED
HISTORY OF CONFLICT IN EUROPE,
WILL REPEAT IN ASIA**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while speaking at a reception given by Shri P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of the Federation and delegate to the world *Buddhist* Conference in honour of Shri M. R. Murti, Vice-President of the Indo-Japanese Cultural Associations in Japan at New Delhi on February 15, 1953, expressed the view that either the present generation or future generations would have to choose between *Budhism* and *Marxism*.

“ In the present condition of the world ” said Dr. Ambedkar, “ so far as I have been able to study the situation, I have come to the conclusion that the conflict, whatever form it may take, will ultimately be between the Gospel of the *Buddha* and the Gospel of *Karl Marx*. ”.

“ It is from that point of view, that I have been attracted by Japan, by China and by other Eastern countries, ” he said.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the East had already become more important than the West, but he feared that if the *Buddhist* Gospel was not adopted, the history of conflict in Europe would be repeated in Asia.

Religions other than *Buddhism* concentrated on the problems of the Souls, of worship, but they forgot man. Dr. Ambedkar added that the *Buddha* alone when pressed for his views on the souls, said, “ Such discussions are unprofitable. Nobody can prove the existence of the souls. I am concerned with man. I am concerned with establishing righteousness between man and man. ” ¹



¹ : The Free Press Journal, dated 16th February, 1953.

**.....THE SO CALLED UPPER CLASSES
WILL BE WIPED OUT OF EXISTENCE**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leader of the Scheduled Castes, told the Youth Assembly in Bombay on Saturday the 2nd May 1953 to go to the masses and rid them of their superstitious inheritance.

He was inaugurating the summer school of the Assembly at the Siddharth College.

Dr. Ambedkar deplored mere academic proficiency and advised modern youth to select one or two contemporary problems and tackle them in a rational manner.

He was bewildered by the number of political ideologies which had infiltrated the student world, probably due to foreign influences.

He asked the assembly to formulate a plan with definite objects in view and eschew lectures in Philosophy or European history if it sought concrete results.

Dr. Ambedkar warned that unless the so-called upper classes made an immediate and balanced appraisal of present times, they would be 'wiped out of existence.'

"The time has come when small groups of students must go to the masses and teach them to lead a rational life," he remarked.

He described modern society as a mangled one, living in modern times the ideals of ancient society.

He observed that we had adopted a Constitution totally different from the principles and rules which really governed our pattern of life.

Dr. B. G. Gokhale, President of the Youth Assembly, welcomed Dr. Ambedkar.¹



¹ : The Sunday Standard, dated 3rd May 1953.

UNLESS CASTELESS AND CLASSLESS SOCIETY IS CREATED, THERE WILL BE NO PROGRESS IN INDIA

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, former Law Minister of the Union Government, said in Bombay on Wednesday, May 27th 1953 that he would devote the rest of his life to propagate *Buddhism*.

Dr. Ambedkar, who was addressing a meeting organised by the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation at the Nare Park-maidan, to celebrate *Lord Buddha's* birthday, condemned the Caste System and said that unless a casteless and classless society was created, there would be no progress in the country.

He was happy to note that Hindus also were participating in large numbers in the celebration.

He was sure that *Buddhism* would rapidly spread in India.

Among the other organisations which celebrated *Buddha's* birthday were the *Buddha Society* and the *Boudh Dharma Prachar Samiti*.

The offices of the Government of India in Bombay remained closed on Wednesday on account of *Buddha Jayanti*.

The day was also a postal holiday.

Banks and offices of the State Government worked as usual as the day was not a public holiday. ' ¹

C. I. D. report of the meeting is as follows—

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presided over a meeting held under the auspices of the Buddha Dharma Prachar Samiti, on May 27th 1953 at Nare Park, Parel, Bombay. While addressing the audience (5,000) he said that there were many points of difference between the Hindu religion and the Buddhist religion and that be remaining in the Hindu religion, the Harijans would not improve their lot. He also declared that he had determined to carry on propaganda of the *Buddhist religion*. ” ²



¹ : The National Standard, dated 28th May 1953.

² : Bombay City, S. B; (i), C. I. D; dated 27th May 1953.

DON'T GET MISLED BY CRITICISM

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed an audience of about 3,000 persons on June 3, 1953, in a public meeting held under the auspices of the Scheduled Castes Mahila Mandal at Rawli Camp, Sion, Bombay. He said that there was much criticism on his speech made on the “ Buddha Jayanti ” day and advised the audience not to be misled by the criticism. ” ¹

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed a meeting (3,000) on behalf of the Scheduled Caste Mahila Mandal in Bombay on June 3rd, 1953 and advised them to carry on their programme of emancipation in spite of adverse criticism. The Mandal contributed Rs. 401 as its first instalment towards the Building Fund of the Federation.” ²

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¹ : Bombay City, S. B; (i), C. I. D; dated 28th May 1953.

² : Bombay State Police (Secret) Abstract of Intelligence.

**“POLITICS IS NOT THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL
OF THE NATION’S LIFE ”**

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was fully engaged in the work of his colleges in July and August 1953. For most of the days in July and August, he stayed in Aurangabad. There he addressed a meeting of the Hyderabad Scheduled Castes Federation workers and leaders.

He said,

Politics was not the be-all and end-all of the nation’s life. He urged them to study diligently the Indian Problem in all its aspects, political, social, religious and economic, and then fight with own accord for the salvation of the downtrodden. At this meeting he sounded a note of warning to his people that he would ex-communicate those who would make pilgrimages to Hindu places of worship. He said it did not do them any good.”¹

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¹ : Keer, Pp. 447-448.

WE WILL CARRY ON ALL INDIA LAND SATYAGRAHA EVEN AGAINST CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

“ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, President of the Scheduled Castes Federation, today, the November 16th, 1953 at New Delhi, has asked his partymen in Marathwada of Hyderabad State to withdraw their land *Satyagraha* in Aurangabad district.

He complimented the Hyderabad Government for the good treatment they meted out to the *satyagrahis*.

The State Government had issued orders to restore the land and was considering a proposal to allot to the Scheduled Castes the forest areas cleared during the days of communist activity.

“ I think this is a good response to a legitimate grievance ” Dr. Ambedkar said.

Out of 1,700 *satyagrahis* some 1,100 had been released unconditionally without trial by the State Government. “ I must say that this is a very gracious act. ”

Dr. Ambedkar added : “ I have heard that some of the *satyagrahis* cut down trees for which I express my regret. Our object was to get land for cultivation and not to cut trees. ”

Dr. Ambedkar said he was issuing the statement to clear two misunderstandings.

It had been suggested by some members of the Federation, that the *Satyagrah* in Hyderabad State had not been authorised by him. This was wrong. “ This *Satyagraha* was authorised by me and for very good reasons. ”

“ The Scheduled Castes people all over India have been living in dire poverty without land and without work and when I found that the Hyderabad Government had in the first instance, granted them some waste land to cultivate and had taken back the land after the grantees had ploughed, sown and were only waiting for gathering the harvest, there was no other way left except to take action. ”

The first and foremost duty of the leaders was to advance the interest of the Scheduled Castes and when a situation arises which jeopardies the interest of the Scheduled Castes it is treason for a leader not to be stir himself into doing something," he added.

Dr. Ambedkar said : " We will carry on an All-India *Satyagraha* even against the Central Government when our patience is exhausted. If the Sikhs can do it why cannot the Scheduled Castes ? "

Those, therefore, who objected to the *Satyagraha*, had better get out of the Federation, Dr. Ambedkar added.

The second misunderstanding related to the reorganisation of the Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation. The statement of Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of the All-India Federation, that the working committee of the Federation had decided to break up this branch into four separate branches was a fact and the decision was final.

This pattern of organisation had not been devised for the Hyderabad State only, but adopted throughout the country wherever this Federation existed, he added. He warned members of the Federation that while so far the organisation had been very lenient to those who have been violating the orders of the Federation, hereafter no mercy will be shown to any one who acts contrary to them. "¹

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¹ : The National Standard, dated 17th November, 1953.

IT IS CRIMINAL TO COLLECT MONEY IN THE NAME OF RELIGION AND WASTE IT

Inaugural Address by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar M.A., Ph.D.,
Bar-at-Law, at All India Sai Devotees Convention held on
January 24, 1954 on Zeviyar College ground at Bombay.

He said,

“Many thanks for your invitation to address you a few words on this occasion. I have no claim for it. I do not belong to those who are reckoned as the followers of Sai Baba. I have not had the good fortune of meeting or seeing the Sai Baba. I only heard of him. It would have been better if someone, who knew him better, had been invited to speak to you on this occasion. But, as those who came to invite me insisted that the resolution to invite me was unanimous one, it was not easy to say 'No' though in the present condition of my health I could have very easily done so.

As I have said before, my knowledge of Sai Baba is nil and what little I know about him consists of what I have heard about him. The Baba is dead some time ago and I understand that he has left large gathering of followers who are ever growing even though the Baba is dead. He is known to be a Religious *Guru* to many.

Religion in India has taken various shades. In its original form religion was a matter of personal salvation of a man's soul. Later on there was a great change in the religious outlook and purpose. It meant not so much the salvation of the soul as the maintenance of a human brotherhood based on moral rules governing the mutual conduct of human beings towards each other. Then came a third stage which led men to worship those personalities who satisfied the wants of their lives. Some wanted children, some wanted gold, some wanted escape from a calamity. If a person satisfied such material wants he became their God and they worshipped him. Then the fourth was to worship a person who performed miracles of one sort or the other, which were beyond the ken of common men, and the miracle-maker became a God. We find in India all these.

Today in India there is no religion without the worship of idols, *Sadhu* and Saint and miracle-maker. Our religion today has neither God nor morality. I have no doubt that this is a very degraded state of human mind and it is a task for the future generations to restore religion to its purer and nobler form.

In the meantime, we must take note of the facts such as they exist. We have not only gone the wrong way in the matter of religion but it has become a profession to collect money in the name of religion and waste it on purposes for which there can be no social justification. There is so much poverty and misery in the world that it is criminal to collect money in the name of religion and waste it on feeding Brahmins and other pilgrims.

The Buddha had well considered this question. In his moral code, the Buddha preached the *Pancha Shila*, the *Ashtanga Marga* and *Nibbana*. But in addition, he taught his followers to cultivate ten virtues--(1) प्रज्ञा (*Pradnya*), (2) शील (*Sheela*), (3) नेखम्म (*Nekhamma*), (4) दान (*Dana*), (5) वीर्य (*Veerya*), (6) खन्ति (*Khanti*) (7) सच्च (*Sachha*), (8) अधित्थान (*Adhitthan*), (9) मैत्री (*Maitri*), and (10) उपेक्खा (*Upekkha*). *Pradnya* is wisdom, the light that removes the darkness of *Avidya*, *Moha* is Neo-science, *Sheela* is moral temperament, the disposition not to do evil and the disposition to be good. *Nekhamma* is renunciation of the pleasures of the world. *Dana* means the giving of one's own possession--blood and limb, and even life--without expecting anything in return. *Veerya* is right endeavour which is doing with all your might whatever you have undertaken to do, with never a thought of turning back. *Khanti* is forbearance, not to meet hatred with hatred. *Sachcha* is truth; a person must never tell a lie; what he says must be truth and nothing but truth. *Adhitthan* is resolute determination to reach the goal. *Maitri* is extending fellow-feeling to all beings, not only to one who is a friend but also to one who is a foe, not only to men but to all beings. *Upekkha* is detachment as distinguished from indifference, is a state of mind where there is neither like nor dislike, remaining unmoved by the results and yet engaged in the pursuit. The Buddha insisted that these virtues must be practised by every individual to the highest extent possible. That is why they are called in the Pali literature—*Paramitas*.

The Buddha, although he preached *Dana Paramita*, was very particular in insisting that *Dana* must be to a deserving person. While it does elevate the person who gives, it must not degrade the person to whom it is given. Charity is aid and help to those who have fallen in order that they may one day walk the road of life by themselves.

If you have collected money in the name of the saint whom you revere, it is necessary that you should devote this money in the establishment of such acts as are indicated by the *Paramitas*. There is so much misery, so much ignorance and so much sickness that in the modern days it would be an act of cruelty, as I said, to feed well-to-do people who can look after themselves. Such charities should be devoted to hospitals, to education, to establishing small scale industries, for the helpless and the widows who may be enabled to earn their living by being taught some trade or some industry. There are many examples yet to be found for you to copy if you were only convinced of my thesis and if you would only look around yourselves for practical examples.

I hope I have given you some food for thought. If you have collected money, use it in the way I have suggested. It will not only do you good but it will elevate the name of Sai Baba.”¹



¹: Reprinted from a printed booklet circulated in Sai Convention held at Bombay in January 1954.

MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Every man should have a philosophy of life, for everyone must have a standard by which to measure his conduct. And philosophy is nothing but a standard by which to measure.

Negatively, I reject the Hindu Social Philosophy propounded in the Bhagvat Geeta based as it is, on the *Triguna* of the Sankhya philosophy which is in my judgement a cruel perversion of the philosophy of Kapila, and which had made the Caste System and the System of Graded Inequality the law of Hindu Social Life.

Positively, my Social Philosophy, may be said to be enshrined in three words : Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French-Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master, the Buddha. In his philosophy, liberty and equality had a place ; but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality, and absolute equality left no room for liberty. In His Philosophy, law had a place only as a safeguard against the breaches of liberty and equality ; but He did not believe that law can be a guarantee for breaches of liberty or equality. He gave the highest place to fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty or equality or fraternity which was another name for brotherhood or humanity, which was again another name for religion,

Law is secular, which anybody may break while fraternity or religion is sacred which everybody must respect. My philosophy has a mission. I have to do the work of conversion ; for, I have to make the followers of *Triguna* theory to give it up and accept mine. Indians today are governed by two different ideologies. Their political ideal set out in the Preamble to the Constitution affirms a life of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Their social ideal embodied in their religion denies them.

Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR
(All-India Radio broadcast
of speech on October 3, 1954.)



**I AM A DEVOTEE OF GAUTAM BUDDHA,
KABIR, MAHATMA PHULE AND WORSHIPPER
OF LEARNING, SELF-RESPECT AND CHARACTER**

“ Under the auspices of Dr. Ambedkar's Diamond Jubilee Celebration Committee, a public meeting attended by about 25,000 persons was held at Purandare's Stadium, Naigaum, Bombay at about 6-30 p. m. on October 28th, 1954. Shri R. D. Bhandare presided.

Shri Shankar Anant Upasham, while giving an account of the collection towards the purse, said that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had completed 60 years on 14th April 1952, and the celebration ought to have taken place in 1952, but they could not perform the celebration on the date and they were doing it on the day in question. He said that so far they were able to collect about 93,000 rupees and after deduction of expenses the amount would come to Rs. 88,000. This collection had been made from the people of his community in the Greater Bombay. He further said that the people outside Bombay had collected about 32,000 rupees for the Building Fund and that amount would be added in the amount mentioned above and the total amount to be given to Dr. Ambedkar was one lakh and Eighteen Thousand rupees.

The president during the course of his speech said that Dr. Ambedkar was greater than Vyas, Manu, Abraham Lincon and even Karl Marx. He said that there was no leader in India who could be compared with Dr. Ambedkar. It was he who predicted the results of the partition of the country ten years before the actual partition took place. He has sacrificed his whole life for the uplift of the Downtrodden people and while presenting the purse of Rs. one lakh and 18 thousand he on behalf of all the people requested Dr. Ambedkar to use that amount for his own purpose. He assured him that they could collect a separate amount for erecting a building as desired by him.

Dr. Ambedkar in reply declared that the amount given to him would be utilised for building a hall. He said that a land had already been purchased for the purpose and those who were

residing on that plot of land were being removed from that plot. He further said that it was wrong to presume that he was a brilliant student from the beginning. He was an ordinary boy like other boys in his community. He said that his father did not care to maintain the record of his birth date and his exact date of birth was not known. He might be above sixty or below sixty. He said that it was true that he was born at about 12 mid night, and his mother had great pains at the time of his birth. He further said that when he was born, the stars were bad and it was told by the astrologer that his mother would die soon. He was therefore hated by his brothers and sisters. He said that after the death of his mother he was brought up by his aunt. He said that he had gone through religious books like *Mahabharat*, *Bhagwat Gita* in his young days but when he came across the book about Gautam Buddha, it had great impression on him and since that time he became the follower of *Buddha*. He said that the Hindus also would have to embrace *Buddha* Religion for their good. He further said that he was a devotee of *Guatam Buddha*, *Kabir* and *Mahatma Phule* and worshipper of learning, self-respect and character. He had none of the bad habits but he was fond of reading. He said that learning was essential for every individual if he wished to make progress in the life. He further asked the audience to get themselves learned to contribute part of their earnings for their community and work for their Federation wholeheartedly as they had not yet reached the goal. They were on their way to goal and if they showed any slackness, they would fall down. He appealed to them not to quarrel for leadership. He said that he always remained out of Government service as he desired to serve his community, and throughout his life he stuck to the principle. If he had accepted any Government job he would have by this time a pensioner. He said that he was not going to give them guidance for more than 7/8 years. They should come forward in his life time to take up the place.

The function terminated at about 8-45 p. m.

About 300 organisations and individuals garlanded Dr. Ambedkar and his wife.”¹



¹: Police Report : Source Material, Vol. I, Pp. 421-422

BUDDHIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA : A BLUE PRINT

BUDDHA NEEDS NO PASSPORT NOR VISA

The International Buddhist Conference was held on 4th December 1954 at Rangoon (Burma). Dr. B. R. Ambedkar attended the Conference. He delivered the speech in the Conference. He had prepared an enlarged version of his talk in the form of Memorandum in two parts : Part I of the memorandum Contains programme of propagation of Buddhism in India. Out of the points which Dr. Ambedkar has raised in the memorandum I, he himself fulfilled two important points : (1) by publishing the Buddhist Gospel under the title “ BUDDHA AND HIS DHAMMA ” and (2) introducing a ceremony for conversion to Buddhism. Part II consists of the conditions of Indian Buddhist in South-India.—Editors.

Following are the Memoranda :

Memorandum - I

Record of My Talk to the Buddhist Sasana Council of Burma An Enlarged Version

1. To spread Buddhism outside Burma to be one of the aims of the Sasana Council then India is the first country they should make the centre of their effort. No other country will yield so much as India will.

2. The reason is obvious. India is a birthplace of Buddhism. It flourished in India from 543 B.C. to 1400 A.D. i.e. for nearly 2,000 years. Although the Buddhist Religion has vanished, the name of the Buddha is still held in great veneration and the memory of His Religion is still green. In India Buddhism may be a withered plant; but no one can say that it is dead at the roots. He is regarded by the Hindus as Avatar of Vishnu. In India we do not have to restore veneration for a new prophet as Nebuchadnezzar had to do for his Gods among the Jews. All that we have to do is to bring back His religion. Such easy conditions for a fruitful effort cannot be found in any other country. In them there are well and long established

religions and Buddhism would be regarded as an intruder without a passport. So far India is concerned the Buddha needs no passport nor does He require any visa.

3. There are sections among the Hindus who are eager to leave Hinduism and go over to Buddhism. Such are the Untouchables and the Backward Classes. They are against Hinduism because of its doctrine of graded inequality. In the present stage of their intellectual awakening these classes are up in arms against Hinduism. Now is the time to take advantage of their discontent.

They prefer Buddhism to Christianity on three grounds :—

- (1) Buddhism is not a religion which is alien to India;
- (2) The essential doctrine of Buddhism is social equality which they want ;
- (3) Buddhism is rational religion in which there can be no room for superstition.

4. There should be no hesitation in launching the movement on the ground that the majority of the people entering Buddhism in its early stages will be coming from lower classes. The Sasana Council must not make the mistakes which the Christian Missionaries in India made. The Christian Missionaries began by attempting to convert the Brahmins. Their strategy was that if the Brahmins could be converted first the conversion of the rest of the Hindus could not be difficult. For they argued that if the Brahmins could be converted first they could go to the Non-Brahmins and say "When the Brahmins have accepted Christianity why don't you; they are the heads of your religion." This strategy of the missionaries proved fatal to some Christians. Why should they ? They had all the advantages under Hinduism. The Christian Missionaries in India realized their mistake and turned their attention to the Untouchables after wasting hundreds of years in their effort to convert the Brahmins. By the time they turned to the Untouchables the spirit of nationalism had grown up and every thing alien including Christianity was regarded as enemical to the country. The result was that the Christian Missionaries could convert very few Untouchables. The Christian population in India is surprisingly small notwithstanding the missionary efforts

extending over 400 years. They might have converted the whole of Untouchables and the Backward Classes if they had begun with them first.

5. Attention may be drawn to the entry of Christianity in Rome. For it is very instructive. From the pages of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" it is clear that Christianity entered first among the lower classes as Gibbon says among the poor and the despised section of the Roman population. The higher classes came in later on. Gibbon ridicules Christianity as a religion of the poor and the downtrodden. In holding this view Gibbon was thoroughly mistaken. He failed to realize that it is the poor who need religion. For religion, if it is right religion, gives hope of betterment to the poor who having nothing else need as a soothing suction. The rich have everything. They need not live on hope. They live on their possession. Secondly, Gibbon failed to realize that Religion, if it is of the right type, ennobles people and elevates them. People do not degrade religion.

6. I will now turn to the preliminary step which must be taken for the revival of Buddhism in India. I mention below those that occur to me :

- (i) The preparation of a Buddhist Gospel which could be a constant companion of the convert. The want of a small Gospel containing the teachings of the Buddha is a great handicap in the propagation of Buddhism. The common man cannot be expected to read the 73 volumes of the Pali Cannon. Christianity has a great advantages over Buddhism in having the message of Christ contained in a small booklet 'The Bible'. This handicap in the way of the propagation of Buddhism must be removed. In regard to the preparation of Buddha's Gospel care must be taken to emphasise the social and moral teachings of the Buddha. I have to emphasise this because what is emphasised is meditation, contemplation and Abhidhamma. This way of presenting Buddhism to Indians would be fatal to our cause.

(ii) The introduction of a ceremony like Baptism is in Christianity for the laity. There is really no ceremony of conversion i. e. for becoming a lay disciple of the Buddha. Whatever ceremony of conversion there is, is for becoming a Bhikkhu, for entering into the *Sangha*. Among the Christians there are two ceremonies -

- (1) for Baptism showing acceptance of Christianity and
- (2) for ordination i.e. becoming a priest. In Buddhism there is no ceremony like Baptism. This is the main reason why people after becoming Buddhist slip out of Buddhism. We must not introduce a ceremony like the Christian Baptism which every lay person must undergo before he can be called a "Buddhist". Merely uttering the *Pancha Sila* is not enough. Many other points must be added to make person feel that he is ceasing to be a Hindu and becoming a new man.

(iii) The appointment of a number of lay preachers who could go about and preach the Buddhists and see how far they are following the Buddha's Dhamma. The lay preachers must be paid and secondly they may be married persons. In the beginning they may be part time workers.

(iv) The establishment of a Buddhist Religious Seminary where persons who wish to become preachers could be taught Buddhism and also comparative study of other Religions.

(v) The introduction of congregational worship in the *Vihara* every Sunday followed by a sermon.

7. In addition to these preliminary steps it is necessary to do some other things which require to be done in a big way as aid to our propagation campaign. In this connection I make the following proposals :

- I. Building big temples and *Viharas* in the four important towns, (1) Madras; (2) Bombay; (3) Nagpur and (4) Delhi.

- II. Establishment of High Schools and Colleges in the following towns; (1) Madras; (2) Nagpur; (3) Calcutta and (4) Delhi.
- III. Inviting Essays of Buddhist topics and giving prizes to the first three sufficient in value so as to attract people to make their best efforts to study Buddhist literature. The essays should be open to all, Hindus, Muslims and Christians; to men as well as to women. This is the best way of making people interested in the study of Buddhism.

8. Temples should be as big as to create the impression that something big is really happening. High Schools and Colleges are necessary adjuncts. They are intended to create Buddhist atmosphere among younger men. Besides they will not only pave their way but bring a surplus which could be used for other missionary work. It should be remembered that most of the Christian Missions find funds for financing their activities from the surplus revenue which is yielded by the Schools and Colleges they run.

9. I have set out above that preliminary steps must be taken. I feel that I must also set out what precautions must be taken in launching the movement for the revival of Buddhism in India, if Buddhism is not to disappear again.

10. Buddhism has not disappeared from India, because its doctrines were found or proved to be false. The reasons for the disappearance of Buddhism from India are different. Buddhism was in the first place over powered and suppressed by the Brahmins. It is now sufficiently known that the last Maurya Emperor, decendent of Emperor Asoka, was murdered by the Brahmin Commander-in-chief by name Pushya Mitra who usurped the throne and established Brahminism as a State religion. This led to the suppression of Buddhism in India which is one of the causes of its decline. While the rise of Brahminism brought about the suppression of Buddhism in India the Muslim invasion of India brought about its complete destruction, by the violence it practised in destroying Viharas and killing *Bhikkhus*.

11. The danger to Buddhism from Islam no longer exists but the danger from Brahminism exists. It will be its toughest opponent. A Brahmin will remain a Brahmin no matter what colour he assumes or what party he joins. That is because Brahmins want to maintain the system of graded social inequality. For it is this graded inequality which has raised the Brahmins above all and to be on the top of everybody. Buddhism believes in equality. Buddhism strikes at the very root of their prestige and power. That is why the Brahmins hate it. It is quite possible that if the Brahmins are allowed to lead the movement of revival of Buddhism they may use their power to sabotage it or misdirect it. The precaution to exclude them from position of power at least in the early stages of our movement is, therefore, very necessary.

12. All these proposals raise a question of finance. This question it must be frankly said, cannot be solved by India. The only people who could help are the Buddhists in India, who in the early stages must be very few. The burden must, therefore, be borne by the Buddhist countries outside India which I feel they can easily do by diverting their *Dana* to this purpose.

(Sd.) B. R. Ambedkar.

Memorandum II

Report on The Condition of Buddhism in South India

1. I went on tour of South India to see for myself the condition of Indian Buddhist Communities there, I was there from 7th to 14th July.

2. I found that there exists Buddhists Communities in the following places :

A. , Near Madras city there are two centres :

- (i) Perambur; and
- (ii) Kanchipuram (Chingeput)

B. In the Interior of the Madras State :

- (i) Palikonda (in North Arcot District) ;
- (ii) Tripuram (in North Arcot District);
- (iii) Vellature (in Vellur District) and
- (iv) Vaniveda (in Banipeth).

C. In the Mysore State :

- (i) Kolar Gold Fields;
 - (ii) Prazer Town, Cantonment Bangalore City
- and (iii) Near Central Jail in the Bangalore City.

These centres of Buddhism in South India have been in existence for about 30/40 years. It speaks of their remarkable tenacity to hold on to Buddhism, surrounded though they are by Brahmins and Hindus.

4. The Viharas that they have built out of their own resources are poor structures. It would be a great encouragement if some help could be given to them to renovate, rebuilt and repair their Viharas.

5. I met the Maharaja, the Rajapramukh of Mysore State on the 8th July and requested him to grant a piece of land which is situated in Bangalore and which is his personal property for opening a centre for our work in Bangalore. The Maharaja was very graciously pleased to donate 5 acres of land. I enclose herewith a copy of letter from the Personal Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja. Please keep this matter a secret. The gift deed has yet to be drawn up.

6. This is a beautiful piece of land and has a beautiful situation. It is also very valuable. My idea is to use this land for constructing a Buddhist Religious Seminary for training our priests and our preachers and also a centre for propagation of Buddhism in South India.

(Sd.) B. R. AMBEDKAR.



PANDURANG WAS NONE OTHER THAN BUDDHA

While unveiling an image of Buddha in a newly constructed Buddha Vihar at Dehu Road near Poona, on 25th December 1954, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar told his audience* that the image of the God Vithoba at Pandharpur was in reality the image of the Buddha. He said further that the name of the God Pandurang was derived from Pundalik. Pundalik meant lotus and lotus was called Pandurang in Pali. So Pandurang was none other than Buddha. According to him, Buddhism disappeared from India because of the wavering attitude of the laity which worshipped many other Gods and Goddesses set up by Brahmins to destroy Buddhism.¹

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* : About 4,000 attended the function : Source material Vol. I, P. 423.

¹ : Kuber, Ambedkar—A Critical Study, P. 94.

**THERE IS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
THE AHIMSA PREACHED BY
BUDDHISM AND JAINISM**

Extracts from the speech delivered by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at a meeting held at Buddha Vihar under the auspices of the Mahabodhi Society of India, New Delhi on the 5th February 1956.

Any religion that cannot provide an answer to Communism will not survive. The only religion, in my view, that can serve as an antidote to Communism is Buddhism.

I do not agree with those who believe in every faith and pick up something from every where. Such an attitude is in evidence in India. One should make one's choice and stick to it.

One faith can be different from another. There is a great difference between the Ahimsa preached by Buddhism and the Ahimsa preached by Jainism. The latter has taken Ahimsa to the highest degree.

I have full faith in the rebirth. I can prove it to scientists that rebirth was logical. In my view, it is the elements that changed and not the man.



WHY I LIKE BUDDHISM

In the short time allotted to me, I am asked to answer two questions. First is "Why I like Buddhism" and the second is "How useful it is to the world in its present circumstances".

I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. All other religions are bothering themselves with God and Soul and life after death. Buddhism teaches *Prajna* (understanding as against superstition and supernaturalism). It teaches *Karuna* (love). It teaches *Samata* (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life on earth. These three principles of Buddhism make their appeal to me. These three principles should also make an appeal to the world. Neither God nor Soul can save society.

There is a third consideration which should make an appeal to the world and particularly the South East Asian part of it. The world has been faced with the onslaught of Karl Marx and the Communism of which he is made the father. The challenge is a very serious one. That Marxism and Communism relate to secular affairs. They have shaken the foundation of the religious system of all the countries. This is quite natural for the religious system although today is unrelated to the secular system, yet is the foundation on which every thing secular rests when the secular system cannot last very long unless it has got the sanction of the religion, however, remote it may be.

I am greatly surprised at the turn of mind of the Buddhist countries in South East Asia towards communism. It means that they do not understand what Buddhism is. I claim that Buddhism is a complete answer to Marx and his Communism.

Communism of the Russian type aims to bring it about by a bloody revolution. The Buddhist Communism brings it about by a bloodless mental revolution. Those who are eager to embrace Communism may note that the *Sangh* is a Communist Organisation. There is no private property. This has not been brought about violence. It is the result of a change of mind and yet it has stood for

2500 years. It may have deteriorated but idea is still binding. The Russian Communism must answer this question. They must also answer two other questions. One is that why communistic system is necessary for all times. They have done the work which it may be admitted the Russians could never have been able to do, but when the work is done why the people should not have freedom accompanied by love as the Buddha preached. The South East Asian countries must, therefore, be beware of jumping into the Russian Net. They will never be able to get out of it. All that is necessary to them is to study the Buddha and what he taught, a right and to give political form to his teachings. Poverty there is and there will always be. Even in Russia there is poverty but poverty cannot be an excuse for sacrificing human freedom.

Unfortunately, the Buddha's teachings have not been properly interpreted and understood. That his gospel was a collection of doctrines and social reforms have been completely misunderstood. Once it is realized that Buddhism is a social gospel, the revival of it would be everlasting event for the world will realize why Buddhism makes such a great appeal to every one.

26, Alipur Road,

New Delhi,

Dated : 12th May 1956.

(Sd.) (B. R. AMBEDKAR)



THE TIDE OF BUDDHISM WOULD NEVER RECEDE IN INDIA

A letter was published in Prabuddha Bharat of 12th May 1956 requesting to celebrate 2500th Buddha Jayanti by all the branches of Indian Buddhist Council. Accordingly a historical meeting has arranged at 'Nare Park' Bombay on 24th May 1956. About seventy five thousand people were assembled for this meeting. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Balasaheb Kher, former Prime Minister of Bombay State. He spoke on the life of Buddha and his Dhamma.¹

After his speech Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that he would embrace Buddhism in October 1956. In his speech he made a vitriolic attack on Veer Savarkar who had written a series of articles on the non-violence preached by Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar with a snort of rage said.

He would reply to Savarkar if he knew precisely what Savarkar had to say. It seemed as if there was again a fierce debate between the leaders of Hinduism and those of Buddhism. Those alone, Dr. Ambedkar roared, who aimed at uplifting them were entitled to criticize them. He said his critics should leave him alone ; let him and his people have the freedom to fall into a ditch. Dr. Ambedkar stated frankly that his people were his sheep, and he was their shepherd. There was no theologian as great as he. They should follow him, and they would get knowledge by and by.

To him Buddhism differed from Hinduism. He further observed : "Hinduism believes in God. Buddhism has no God. Hinduism believes in soul. According to Buddhism there is no soul. Hinduism believes in *Chaturvarnya* and the Caste System. Buddhism has no place for the Caste System and *Chaturvarnya*." He told his followers that his book on Buddhism would be published soon. He had closed all the breaches in the organization of Buddhism and would now consolidate it ; so the tide of Buddhism would never recede in India. The communists should study Buddhism, so that they might know how to remove the ills of humanity.

¹ : Prabuddha Bharat, dated 2nd June 1956.

During his speech Dr. Ambedkar compared himself with Moses who had led his people from Egypt to Palestine, the land of freedom. According to him, there were three causes for the decline of any religion. Lack of abiding principles in it ; lack of versatile and conquering orators ; and lack of easily understandable principles. He also declared that he was going to build a magnificent temple of Buddha.

Thus ended his last speech in Bombay. ¹



¹ : Keer, Pp. 492-93.

PROSPECTS OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA *

The subject assigned to me is, "What are the prospects of democracy in India"? Most Indians speak with great pride as though their country was already a democracy. The foreigners also, when they sit at a dinner table to do diplomatic honour to India, speak of the Great Indian Prime Minister and the Great Indian Democracy.

From this, it is held without waiting to argue that where there is a Republic, there must be democracy. It is also supposed that where there is Parliament which is elected by the people on adult suffrage and the laws are made by the People's Representatives in Parliament elected after every few years, there is democracy. In other words, democracy is understood to be a political instrument and where this political instrument exists, there is democracy.

Is there democracy in India or is there no democracy in India? What is the truth? No positive answer can be given unless the confusion caused by equating democracy with Republic and by equating democracy with Parliamentary Government is removed.

Democracy is quite different from a Republic as well as from Parliamentary Government. The roots of democracy lie not in the form of Government, Parliamentary or otherwise. A democracy is more than a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living. The roots of Democracy are to be searched in the social relationship, in the terms of associated life between the people who form a society.

What does the word 'Society' connote? To put it briefly when we speak of 'Society,' we conceive of it as one by its very nature. The qualities which accompany this unity are praiseworthy community of purpose and desire for welfare, loyalty to public ends and mutuality of sympathy and co-operation.

Are these ideals to be found in Indian Society? The Indian Society does not consist of individuals. It consists of an innumerable collection of castes which are exclusive in their life

* Voice of America, 20th May 1956.

and have no common experience to share and have no bond of sympathy. Given this fact it is not necessary to argue the point. The existence of the Caste System is a standing denial of the existence of those ideals of society and therefore of democracy.

Indian Society is so imbedded in the Caste System that every thing is organized on the basis of caste. Enter Indian Society and you can see caste in its glaring form. An Indian cannot eat or marry with an Indian simply because he or she does not belong to his or her caste. An Indian cannot touch an Indian because he or she does not belong to his or her caste. Go and enter politics and you can see caste reflected therein. How does an Indian vote in an election? He votes for a candidate who belongs to his own caste and no other. Even the Indian Congress exploits the Caste System for election purpose as no other political party in India does. Examine the lists of its candidates in relation to the social composition of the constituencies and it will be found that the candidate belongs to the caste which is the largest one in that constituency. The Congress, as a matter of fact, is upholding the Caste System against which it is outworldly raising a outcry against the existence of caste.

Go into the field of industry. What will you find? You will find that all the topmost men drawing the highest salary belong to the caste of the particular industrialist who owns the industry. The rest hang on for life on the lowest rungs of the ladder on a pittance. Go into the field of commerce and you will see the same picture. The whole commercial house is one camp of one caste, with no entry board on the door for others.

Go into the field of charity. With one or two exceptions all charity in India is communal. If a Parsi dies, he leaves his money for Parsis. If a Jain dies, he leaves his money for Jains. If a Marwadi dies, he leaves his money for Marwadis. If a Brahmin dies, he leaves his money for Brahmins. Thus, there is no room for the downtrodden and the outcastes in politics, in industry, in commerce, and in education.

There are other special features of the Caste System which have their evil effects and which militate against Democracy. One such special feature of the Caste System lies in its being accompanied by what is called 'Graded Inequality'. Castes are not equal in their status. They are standing one above another. They are

jealous of one another. It is an ascending scale of hatred and descending scale of contempt. This feature of the Caste System has most pernicious consequences. It destroys willing and helpful co-operation.

Caste and class differ in the fact that in the Class System there is no complete isolation as there is in the Caste System. This is the second evil effect in the Caste System accompanied by inequality. This manifests itself in the fact that the stimulus and response between two castes is only one-sided. The higher caste act in one recognised way and the lower caste must respond in one established way. It means that when there is no equitable opportunity to receive the stimulus from and to return the response from different caste, the result is that the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves. The experience of each party loses its meaning when the free interchange of varying modes of life experience is arrested. It results into a separation of society, into a privileged and a subject class. Such a separation prevents social endosmosis.

There is a third characteristic of the Caste System which depicts the evils thereof which cuts at the very roots of democracy. It is that one caste is bound to one occupation. Society is no doubt stably organized when each individual is doing that for which he has aptitude by nature in such a way as to be useful to others; and that it is the business of society to discover these aptitudes and progressively to train them for social use. But there is in a man an indefinite pluralities of capacities and activities which may characterize an individual. A society to be democratic should open a way to use all the capacities of the individual. Stratification is stunting of the growth of the individual and deliberate stunting is a deliberate denial of democracy.

How to put an end to the Caste System ? The first obstacle lies in the system of graded inequality which is the soul of the Caste System. Where people are divided into two classes, higher and lower, it is easier for the lower to combine to fight the higher, for there is no single lower class. The class consists of lower and lowerer. The lower cannot combine with the lowerer. For the lower is afraid that if he succeeds in raising the lowerer, he may well himself lose the high position given to him and his caste.

The second obstacle is that, the Indian Society is disabled by unity in action by not being able to know what is its common good. Plato has said that the organization of society depends ultimately upon knowledge of the end of existence. If we do not know its end, if we do not know its good, we shall be at the mercy of accident and caprice. Unless we know the good of the end, we have no criterion for rationally deciding what the possibilities are which we should promote. Question is, can the Indian Society in its caste-bound state achieve what is the ultimate question? We come upon the most insuperable obstacle that such knowledge is not possible save in a just and harmonious social order. Can there be a harmonious Social Order under the Caste System? Everywhere the mind of the Indians is distracted and misled by false valuations and false perspectives. A disorganised and factional society sets up number of different models and standards. Under such conditions it is impossible for individual Indian to reach consistency of mind on the question of caste.

Can education destroy caste? The answer is 'Yes' as well as 'No'. If education is given as it is to-day, education can have no effect on caste. It will remain as it will be. The glaring example of it is the Brahmin Caste. Cent percent of it is educated, nay, majority of it is highly educated. Yet not one Brahmin has shown himself to be against caste. Infact an educated person belonging to the higher caste is more interested after his education to retain the Caste System than when he was not educated. For education gives him an additional interest in the retention of the Caste System namely by opening additional opportunity of getting a bigger job.

From this point of view, education is not helpful as means to dissolve caste. So far is the negative side of education. But education may be solvent if it is applied to the lower strata of the Indian Society. It would raise their spirit of rebellion. In their present state of ignorance they are the supporters of the Caste System. Once their eyes are opened they will be ready to fight the Caste System.

The fault of the present policy is that though education is being given on a larger scale, it is not given to the right strata of Indian Society. If you give education to that strata of Indian Society which has a vested interest in maintaining the Caste System for the

advantages it gives them, then the Caste System will be strengthened. On the other hand, if you give education to the lowest strata of Indian Society which is interested in blowing up the Caste System, the Caste System will be blown up. At the moment the indiscriminate help given to education by the Indian Government and American Foundation is going to strengthen the Caste System. To make rich richer and poor poorer is not the way to abolish poverty. The same is true of using education as a means to end the Caste System. To give education to those who want to keep up the Caste System is not to improve the prospect of Democracy in India but to put our Democracy in India in greater jeopardy.

26, Alipur Road,

New Delhi,

Dated : 20th May 1956.

Sd / B. R. Ambedkar



THE BUDDHA DHAMMA WILL BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared his conversion to Buddhism through a statement issued from New Delhi.

The Statement is as follows—

26, Alipore Road,
Civil Lines, Delhi.
23rd September 1956.

The date and place of my conversion to Buddhism has now been finally fixed. It will take place at Nagpur on the *Dussehra** day i.e. 14th October 1956. The ceremony of conversion will take place between 9 and 11 a.m. and in the evening of the same day I will address the gathering.

Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR,
23rd September 1956.”

The programme was published in detail in ‘Prabuddha Bharat’ Weekly. It was informed that those who are desirous of converting, should be above 18 years of age.¹

The complete responsibility of the organizing this conversion programme was delegated to ‘Indian Buddhist Council’, Nagpur branch. Accordingly, Mr. W. M. Godbole, Secretary of the committee, published a handbill as follows :—

“Mass Conversion

Revered Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Founder and President of Buddhist Society of India shall embrace Buddhism at the ceremony to be held at Nagpur at 8 a. m. on the Vijaya Dashmi day-Sunday, the 14th October 1956. **Venerable Bhikkhu Chandramani MahaThera of Burma**, now in India, shall perform the ceremony.

* *Ashoka Vijaya Dashmi.*

¹: Prabuddha Bharat, 29th September 1956.

People desirous of getting themselves converted shall be able to do so at the very ceremony, and shall be required to wear clean and white garments.

Appeal For Funds

In this benevolent ceremony the people, it is hoped, shall participate in lacs; and shall render every possible aid to the **local branch of the Bharatiya Bouddha Jana Samiti** to whom the revered Baba has entrusted the task of managing this great ceremony. While rendering the financial aid to the local benevolents shall insist on having receipts of the Samiti concerned. Outsiders will kindly remit money by money order.

Those who want to volunteer themselves to assist the management of the celebrations shall see the undersigned on or before the 30th September 1956.

W. M. GODBOLE,

Secretary,

Bharatiya Bouddha Jana Samiti

Dated, (Nagpur Branch), Kothari Mansion,
The 21st September 1956. Sitabuldi, Nagpur.”¹

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar through a letter requested Reverend Bhikkhu Chandramani to perform the Conversion Ceremony. The letter is as follows :

“ 26, Alipur Road,

Delhi

the 24th September 1956.

Reverend Bhikku Chandramani,
Kushenara, Gorakhpur District,
Uttar Pradesh.

Reverend Bhante,

This is to inform you that I and my wife have decided to embrace Buddhism. The ceremony is to take place at Nagpur on the 14th of October, 1956. The time of the ceremony is

¹: Wamanrao Godbole, P. 266.

fixed in the morning between 9 and 11. It is our great wish that you should officiate at the ceremony. You being the oldest Buddhist Monk in India we think it would be appropriate to have the ceremony performed by you.

We realise that your physical condition may make it difficult for you to go to Nagpur but we can manage to provide the transport from Kushenara to Nagpur either by air or by train and all other arrangements for your living in Nagpur. We can send some one to take you from Kushenara to Nagpur. Please let us know whether you can accept the invitation of ours.

With kind regards.

Your sincerely,

(Signed) B. R. AMBEDKAR. ”¹

On the eve of this occasion ‘Prabuddha Bharat’ published a special supplement on 12th October 1956.

“It was informed that this programme is free to all but the committee requested them to become member by paying one rupee as subscription. The responsibility of the expenses was to be borne by the people of Nagpur. The reception committee membership fee was Rs. 25 and it was open to all.

It was informed that the registration for the conversion begins from 11th October 1956 and the office will work even at the place of conversion. Two tickets were issued to all the registered delegates which were useful for the entry at the conversion place.

The volunteers were directed to come in white half pant and white shirt. Mr. K. V. Umre, Mr. Sacchindand Manke and Mr. R. R. Patil were entrusted with the responsibility to guide the Volunteers coming from outside Nagpur.”

Looking into the demand of the people a special train was arranged by the Railways to carry the people from Bombay to Nagpur. This train was to start on 12th October 1956 at 9.15 p.m. from Bombay V. T. and accordingly a notice was published by railway authorities. In spite of this, all the trains going to Nagpur were full of people. On every station wherever these trains stopped more and more people entered the trains.

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. 12, P. 48.

Accommodations for all these people were made in the schools of Nagpur.

The programme was arranged on the open ground near Vaccine Institute, South Ambazari Road, Nagpur. The ground was covered by bamboo sheets. About 3000 electric bulbs were arranged all over the ground. The separate arrangement for women was made.”¹

“ Shri Revaram Kawade and Shri W. M. Godbole took of a brochure giving the details of conversion Ceremony.

Saturday 13-10-1956

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Evening 5—8 p.m. | Paritran |
| 8—10 p.m. | Lecture of Shri D. Valisinha,
General Secretary, Mahabodhi
Society. |
| | Magic lantern show on Life
of Buddha and well-known
Buddhist places in India. |

Sunday 14-10-1956

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 8—11 a.m. | Conversion Ceremony of
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar,
Mrs. Maisaheb Ambedkar
and other people by Hon.
Chandramani Mahasthavir. |
| 11—11.25 a.m. | Presentation of Buddha idol
sculpture to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
by Mahabodhi Society, Calcutta. |
| 6—7 p.m. | Lecture by Shri D. Valisinha,
General Secretary,
Mahabodhi Society. |
| 8—11 p. m. | ‘Yugyyatra’ a Marathi play by
Milind College, Aurangabad. |

Monday 15-10-1956

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 8—11 a.m. | Public address by
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar . |
| 8—10 p.m. | Magic lantern show. |

¹ Navyug. dated 21st October, 1956.

14th October 1956 :

On 14th October, people got up early in the morning and started towards Deeksha Bhoomi, in the processions, shouting slogans. 2 to 2.5 lakh people thronged and the half of the pandal was full by 7 a. m. The arrangement of this Ceremony was entrusted to 'Samata Sainik Dal' of Nagpur and Mumbai. There were only 10 to 11 police posted for this Ceremony. A special arrangement was made for the media. There were about 30 press reporters from India and abroad. The people intended to get converted were so enormous in numbers that all the entry cards got exhausted and eventually the organisers were forced to declare the ceremony open to all.

The Conversion Ceremony :

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar arrived at the place alongwith Mahasthvir Bhikkhu Chandramani at 9.30 a.m. By that time about 5-6 lakh people were assembled at the place. The other Bhikkhus present in the ceremony were.—

- (1) Thero Pannatis, Sanchi Vihar, Bhopal,
- (2) Ven. Bhikkhu H. Siddhatissa, Ey Ceylon,
- (3) Ven. M. Souhratna, Sarnath, Banaras,
- (4) Bhikkhu G. Pradnyanand, Buddha Vihar, Lucknow,
- (5) Ner Shramner, Dhammodaya Vihar, West Bengal and
- (6) Rev. Paramsandhi.

The ceremony began with the welcome song by Miss Indutai Warale. On this occasion, the rich tributes were paid to Ramji Maloji Subhedar, the father of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Then Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Maisaheb stood with folded hands in front of the idol of Lord Buddha. Mahasthvir Chandramani recited *Trisharan* and *Panchsheela* to them in Pali as follows :

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa
 Namō Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa
 Namō Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa

Meaning :

(Honour to Him, the Holy One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One !)

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Sanghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Dutiyampi Sanghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Tatiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Tatiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
 Tatiyampi Sanghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Meaning :

(I follow the Buddha
 I follow the Dhamma
 I follow the Sangha
 Second Time I follow the Buddha
 Second Time I follow the Dhamma
 Second Time I follow the Sangha
 Third Time I follow the Buddha
 Third Time I follow the Dhamma
 Third Time I follow the Sangha)

Pāṇcha-sila :

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
2. Adinnādānā veramaṇī-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
3. Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
4. Musāvāda veramaṇī-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.
5. Surāmeraya-majja-pamādatthānā veramaṇī-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.

Meaning :

- (1. I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from killing living beings.
2. I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from taking things not given.
3. I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from false speech.
5. I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs.)

In this way Mahasthavir Chadramani initiated Dr. Babasaheb and Maisaheb Ambedkar to Buddhism.

Thereafter Dr. B. R. Ambedkar garlanded the idol of Buddha and bowed thrice before it.

The conversion ceremony for the masses started at 10 a. m. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar proclaimed that, those who are willing to renounce Hindu religion and embrace Buddhism should stand with folded hands and recite *Trisharan* and *Panchsheela* after him. In response to this proclamation, the whole gathering stood up and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar initiated them to Buddhism.

As a part of this Ceremony Dr. B. R. Ambedkar got recited the 22 Oaths from the people, which are as follows :

- “ 1. I shall have no faith in Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, nor shall I worship them.
2. I shall have no faith in Rama and Krishna, nor shall I worship them.
3. I shall have no faith in ‘ Gouri ’, ‘ Ganpathi ’, and other Gods and Goddesses of Hindu religion, nor shall I worship them.
4. I do not believe in the theory of incarnation of Gods.

5. I do not and shall not believe that the Lord Buddha was the incarnation of Vishnu. I believe this to be, mischievous and false propaganda.
6. I shall not perform 'Shraaddha' nor, shall I give 'pind-dan'. *
7. I shall not act in any manner contrary to the principles and teachings of the Buddha.
8. I shall not perform any ceremony through Brahmins.
9. I believe in the equality of mankind.
10. I shall endeavour to establish equality.
11. I shall follow the Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha.
12. I shall follow the 'Ten Paramitas' enunciated by the Buddha.
13. I shall be compassionate to all living beings and nurture them with care.
14. I shall not steal.
15. I shall not lie.
16. I shall not commit carnal sins.
17. I shall not consume liquor.
18. I shall strive to lead my life in conformity with the three principles of Buddhism i. e. *Pradnya* (wisdom), *Sheel* (character) and *Karuna* (compassion).
19. I hereby embrace Buddhism by renouncing my old Hindu religion which is detrimental to the prosperity to the humankind and descriminate human beings and treat them low.
20. I firmly believe that the Buddha Dhamma is the *Saddhamma*.

* Rituals performed in Hindu Religion after the death of a person.

21. I believe, I am entering the new life.
22. Hereafter I pledge to conduct myself in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha.

“Later on Shri Vali Sinha, General Secretary All India Mahabodhi Society, presented the idol of the Buddha to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

The prominent people who embraced Buddhism were—Bar. B. D. *alias* Rajabhau Khobragade, Secretary General Scheduled Castes Federation ; B. K. *alias* Dadasaheb Gaikwad, President Bombay State, S. C. F. ; R. D. Bhandare, President SCF Bombay Region; Shantabai Dani, C. N. Mohite, G. T. Parmar, President Gujrath Branch, S. C. F. ; K. K. Parmar, D. G. Jadhav, Sarojini Jadhav, V. R. Ranpise, Pune; M. M. Sasalekar, Haridas Awale, Sadanand Fulzele, Ahote, V. S. Pagare, S. A. Upshyam, B. S. More, B. H. Varale, Dhondiram Pagare, Yashwantrao Ambedkar (Son of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar), Mukundrao Ambedkar, B. C. Kamble etc.

On this occasion the High Caste Hindus like Justice Bhavani Shankar Niyogi, Shri V. M. Kulkarni, Secretary Bouddha Samiti, Shri M. B. Chitins, Principal, Milind College, Aurangabad, Shri B. S. Kabir also got converted to Buddhism.

After the conclusion of the Conversion Ceremony various messages which came in appreciation as compliment to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were read. The few selected messages from—U. B. Sway, Prime Minister, Burma as well as Yu-Nu former Prime Minister of Burma, H. W. Amarsuriya of Colombo, Dr. Arvind Barua from Culcutta, Mahathero Yu-Pannalok from Rangoon etc. This programme was concluded at 11 a. m.

In the evening of 14th October, a play ‘Yug Yatra’ was staged by the student’s Milind College, Aurangabad.¹

¹ : Prabuddha Bharat—Ambedkar Buddha Deeksha Special number dated 27th October 1956.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the occasion of the Conversion delivered his speech in Marathi on 15th October 1956.

He said,

My all Buddhist fellows and invitees present :

Perhaps it is difficult for the thinkers to understand the significance of the place of conversion (*Deeksha*) ceremony which was performed yesterday and today morning. In their and in my opinion as well the ceremony which was held yesterday should have been held today and today's yesterday. It is essential to know, why we have shouldered this responsibility, what was its necessity and what will be the result of it. By understanding this, the foundation of our mission will become strong. This process of understanding should have occurred earlier. But few things remain so uncertain that, those happen automatically. About this ceremony the things to be happen, happened. But in spite of exchange of days, nothing is harmed.

Many people asked a question, why had you chosen Nagpur the place for this ceremony ? Why this ceremony was not performed at some other place ? A few people say that since the large platoon of R. S. S. (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) is in Nagpur and just to embarrass them this ceremony is being held in this city. This is not true at all. For this reason this ceremony is not being held at Nagpur. Our mission is so stupendous that every minute of life is inadequate. I do not have time to ill-omen others by scratching my nose.

The reason for choosing this place is different. Those who have studied the Buddhist history will come to know that the people who propagated Buddhism in India were the Nag people. Nag people were the fierce enemy of the *Aryans*. Many Fierciful battles took place between the *Aryans* and the Non-Aryans. Many examples are available in the *Puranas* about where the *Aryans* burnt the Nagas. The sage Agasti could save only one Naga. We are the descendents of him. The Naga people who tolerated the oppression needed some great man to uplift them and they found that great man in Lord Gautam Buddha. The Nagas propagated the teachings of Lord Buddha throughout India. Such are we Nagas. The major habitation of the Naga people was in and around Nagpur. Therefore this city

is called 'Nag-pur' means the city of Nagas. There is a Nagarjun Hill about 27 miles from this place. The river flowing nearby is Nag river. Obviously this river got this name because of the people living here. The river which flows through the habitation of the Naga people is the Nag river. This is the main reason to select this place-Nagpur. There is no question of irritating anybody nor the intention. The reason of the R. S. S. even did not touch my mind. Nobody should interpret in that way.

Opposition, could perhaps be for other reasons. I have already explained that this place has not been choosen for antagonism. I have been criticised by many people and newspapers for the initiation of this mission. The criticisms of some is harsh. In their opinion I am misleading my poor Untouchables. They are misguiding some of our people by telling that those who are Untouchables today will remain Untouchables and the rights they have got, they will lose it. They advise illiterate people among us to follow the traditional path. This might be influencing some of the young and elder among us. If, by that the doubts have been arisen in the minds of people, it is our duty to clear those doubts and the clearing of those doubts will strenghthen the foundation of our movement.

In the past we had a movement for not to eat meat. The touchables thought it as if a thunderbolt of lightening for them. Isn't this a strange practice that they should drink the milk of living buffalo and we should carry its carcass on our shoulder after its death. We ask them why don't you allow us to carry your dead mother? They should give us their dead mother as they give us their dead buffalo. Some one some time wrote in the 'Kesari' through correspondence that in certain villages 50 cattle died every year, Rs. 500 could be earned from their hides, horns, hoovers, meat, bones and tails; and leaving aside the matter of meat of dead animals, these people would be deprived of that profit, such propaganda was made through 'Kesari'. Really speaking what was the necessity of replying to such propaganda. Our people felt that what our Saheb (leader) is doing if he is not replying such propaganda?

Once I had been to Sangamner for meeting. The arrangement for the dinner was made. That time a reporter from 'Kesari' sent me a chit and asked, "You are advising your people not to carry dead animals. How poor they are! Their women do not

have sari and blouse to wear, they do not have food, they do not have fields, when their conditions are so miserable, you tell them to give up an income of Rs. 500 per year from hides, hooves, meat, is it not a loss of your people ? ”

I asked, “ where shall I reply you ? Shall I reply here in corridor or in meeting ? It is better to answer before the people. ” I asked the person, “ Is it the only thing or you want to ask anymore ? ” He said, “ This much to say and answer this only ”. I asked that person, “ How many children you have and how many people you are ? ” He said, “ I have five children and my brother has five to seven children ”. I said, “ It means your family is large. Hence, you and your relatives should carry all the dead animals of that village and earn an income of Rs. 500. You must take this benefit. In addition to this I make an arrangement to give you Rs. 500 annually. What will happen to my people, whether they will get food, clothes or not, I will see it myself. Then, why are you giving up this benefit ? Why don't you do this ? If we do it, it is beneficial, and if you do it, isn't beneficial to you ? Carry the dead animals. ”

A Brahmin-boy came to me yesterday and said, “ you have been given reserved seats in the Parliament and the Assemblies, why are you giving them up ? ” I said, “ You become Mahar and fill up those seats in the Parliament and the Assemblies. The vacancies in the services are filled up. So many Brahmins and others apply for the posts. Why don't you Brahmin people fill up these reserved seats by becoming Mahar as you do in services ? ”

My question to them is why do you weep for our loss ? In reality self-respect is dearer to human being and not material gain. A woman with virtues and character knows how much beneficial is immoral behaviour. In our Bombay there is a locality of prostitutes. Those women wake up at 8 O'clock and place an order for the breakfast in nearby hotel, (Dr. Ambedkar imitated this in changed voice) “ O Suleman, get a plate of mince (Kheema) and bread. ” Suleman brings alongwith tea, cake etc. But, my Downtrodden sisters do not get even simple Chuttni-Bhakar (mixture of chilli and salt and bread), but they live with dignity and character.

We are fighting for honour and self-respect. We are getting ready to take the human being towards the perfection, for that we are ready for any sacrifice. These newspaper people (indicating them) got on my nerves for the past forty years. How severely they have maligned me till date ! I ask them to ponder over at least now, leave this childishness and be prudent.

Even after conversion to the Buddhism, I am confident, I will get the political rights. (Shouts in the name of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with thunderous claps). I cannot tell what will happen after my death. For this movement we have to struggle more. What will happen on having embraced the Buddhism if at all there are difficulties, how could those be avoided. For that, what arguments and efforts are to be made, I have thoroughly thought over this. My bag* is with full of solutions. What are those I know fully well. These rights I have obtained for my people. One who obtained these rights, will surely regain them. It I who have obtained these rights and facilities, and I am confident that I will again obtain them. Therefore, now at least you should continue to have faith in me. That there is no truth in the adverse propaganda.

I am surprised at one thing. Everywhere there is debate on large scale. But no one has asked me a question as to why I embraced the Buddhism. Why I embraced only this religion and not any other. This is the basic and important question in the any movement of a conversion. While converting it should be put to the test: Which religion and why it should be embraced. Through a resolution at Yeole in 1935, we started the movement of renouncing the Hindu religion. Long back I had vowed, "Though I am born as a Hindu I will not die as a Hindu" and I proved it yesterday. I am overjoyed, I am exalted. I feel I have been liberated from the hell. I do not want blind followers. Those who wish to embrace Buddhism, they should accept it with comprehension. Their conscious should accept that religion

* Eye witnesses to the conversion ceremony say that Dr. Ambedkar did not use the word ' bag' instead he used the words ' in the pocket of my coat.'

Evenafter the conversion for some years people used to quote this expression.—Editors.

Religion is absolutely essential for the development of mankind. I know that one sect came into existence after reading Karl Marx. According to them religion is futile. They do not have importance of religion. In the morning they get breakfast containing bread, cream, butter, chicken leg etc. full meal, sound sleep, to see movies; and that is all. That is their philosophy. I am not of that opinion. My father was poor; I could not get such kind of luxuries. Nobody has ever lived a life as hard as mine. Therefore, I have a realisation that how hard a man's life can be in the absence of luxuries. I know that economic elevation movement is necessary. I am not against that movement. Man must progress financially.

But I make an important distinction in this matter. There is a difference between buffalo, bull and man. Buffalo and bull need fodder every day. Man also needs food. But the difference in between the two is that buffalo and bull have no mind; man has body and mind too. Therefore, both should be pondered over. The mind should be developed. The mind should be cultured. It should be made cultured. I do not want to have any sort of relationship with such country or people who say that there is no relation between man and cultured mind except the food. As to keep relationship with people man should have sound body in the same way while making the body healthy, the mind should also be cultured. Otherwise, it cannot be said that mankind has been progressed.

Why man's body or mind is ill? The reasons are, either his body is diseased or his mind has no enthusiasm. If there is no enthusiasm in mind there is no progress. Why is not this enthusiasm there? The first reason is that man has been kept in such a way that he does not get any opportunity or he has no hope to rise. That time, how will he remain enthusiastic? He remains diseased. The man who gets the fruit of his deeds can get enthusiasm. Otherwise a teacher in a school started saying, "Hey, who is this? He is a Mahar. And will this wretched Mahar get through in first class? For what he wants first class? Be in third class only—to get in first class is Brahmin's claim. Under these circumstances, what enthusiasm the boy will get? How can he progress? The root of creating enthusiasm is in mind, whose body and mind also are healthy, who is courageous, who has confidence in surmounting all adversities,

in him only enthusiasm is generated and he only excels. Such a strange philosophy has been incorporated in the Hindu religion which can never promote enthusiasm. Circumstances making man unenthusiastic have been maintained for thousands of years, then at the most such people will be produced who would fill their stomach by clerical jobs. What else will happen ? To protect these clerks, a big clerk is needed.

The reason behind man's enthusiasm is mind. You know the owners of mills. They appoint managers for their mills and get the works done in the mills through their managers. Mill owners are involved in some or the other bad habits, their minds have not been developed culturally. We started a movement to infuse enthusiasm in our minds, then the education would be started. I began my education by wearing a loin-cloth. I could not get even water to drink in the school. I spent many days without water in the school. The same situation was maintained even in the Elphinston College in Bombay. If such is the situation, what else conditions will be created. Only clerks will be produced.

Lord Linlithgow was the Viceroy when I was in the Executive Council of Delhi. I said to him, "In addition to the normal expenditure, you spend Rs. Three lac on the Aligarh University for the education of the Muslims. In the same way you give Rs. Three lac to the Banaras Hindu University. But we are neither Hindus nor Muslims. If you think of doing something for us, then thousand times more than them should be done. Do at least as much for us as Muslims." Then Lord Linlithgow said, "Whatever you have to say give me in writing." Accordingly I prepared a memorandum. That manuscript is still with me. Europeans were very sympathetic. They accepted my proposal. The problem was on which item the money had to spend. They thought that, our girls are not educated, they should be provided with education. Boarding be started for them, and the money should be spent on that. If our girls are provided education and made educated, where, at home, is the material to cook various types of dishes? What is the end result of their education ? The Government spent the money on other heads and withheld the amount for education. Therefore, one day I went to Lord Linlithgow and regarding the expenditure on education I said, "If you do not get angry, I would like to ask you a question. I am alone equal to fifty graduates,

Aren't I ? He had to accept it. Again I asked him, " What is the reason of it?" He said, "We do not know the reason." I said, "My learning is so great that I could sit on the pinnacle of the palace. I want such men. Because, from there, one can make overall surveillance. If our people are to be protected, then such sharp eyed men should be created. What can a mere clerk do? At the very moment Lord Linlithgow was convinced by my words and sixteen men were sent to England for higher education. Just as some earthen pots are half-baked and some are baked, of those sixteen some are half-baked and some are baked-this is different matter ! Later on C. Rajgopalachari cancelled this scheme of higher education.

In this country, such situation prevails that will make us unenthusiastic for thousands of years to come. Till this situation exists, there cannot be enthusiasm for our progress. In this regard we cannot do anything by remaining in this religion. There is *Chaturvrana* in *Manusmruti*. *Chaturvrana* system is very harmful for the progress of mankind. It has been mentioned in the *Manusmruti* that *Shudras* should do only menial service. Why do they need education ? The *Brahmin* should take education, *Kshatriya* should take up arms, *Vaishya* should do business and *Shudra* should serve. Who will unfold this system? *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya* and *Vaishya* have some gain, but what about *Shudras*? Will there be any enthusiasm in other castes except these three *varnas* ? This *Chaturvarna* System is not haphazardly ; this is not a custom; this is the religion.

There is no equality in the Hindu religion. Once I had been to Mr. Gandhi, he said, "I believe in *Chaturvarna*." I said, "Mahatmas like you believe in *Chaturvarna* ! But what is this *Chaturvarna* and how is this ? (Dr. Ambedkar expressed this by showing his hand fingers one upon another as well as keeping palm in flat position.) This *Chaturvarna* is whether up or flat ? from where the *Chaturvarna* begins and where does it end ? Gandhiji did not answer this question and what answer can he give? Those who ruined us, also be perished by this religion. I do not accuse this Hindu religion unnecessarily. Nobody will prosper by the Hindu religion. That religion itself is a ruinous religion.

Why did our country go under the rule of foreigners? Till 1945 Europe witnessed the wars. In whatever number soldiers were killed that number was filled by new recruitment. That time nobody could say that we had won the war. Everything is altogether different of our country. If *Kshatriyas* are killed, we are doomed. Had we right to possess the arms, this country would not have gone in servitude. No one could have been able to conquer this country.

By remaining in the Hindu religion nobody can prosper in any way. Because of the stratification in Hindu religion, it is fact that higher *varnas* and castes are benefitted. But, what about the others? The moment Brahmin woman delivers a child, her eyes are focussed towards a post of High Court Judge where it is lying vacant. On the contrary, when our sweeper woman delivers a child, her eyes are focussed on a post of sweeper where it is lying vacant. The *Varna*-System of Hindu religion is responsible for such a strange social structure. What improvement can take place from this? Prosperity can be achieved only in the Buddhist religion.

In the Buddhist religion 75% *Bhikkhus* were Brahmins. 25% were the *Shudras* and others. But the Lord Buddha said, "O, *Bhikkhus*, you have come from different countries and castes. Rivers flow separately when they flow in their provinces, but they lose their identity when they meet the sea. They become one and the same. The Buddhist *Sangh* is like an ocean. In this *Sangh* all are equal." After they merge into the ocean, it is not possible to identify the water of Ganga or Mahanadi. Similarly when we join Buddha *Sangh*, we lose our caste and become equal. There is only one Great Man who preached such equality, and that Great Man is Lord Buddha. (Thunderous applause).

Some people say, "Why did you take so much time to get converted? What were you doing all these days? This is the question of importance. Convincing a religion is not an easy task. That is not the mission of a single person. Any person thinking of religion will come to know this. No man in the world shoulder as much responsibility as do I. If I get a long life, I will fulfill my planned work. (Shouts of 'long live Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar')".

Some people will say what will happen if Mahar becomes Buddhist. I tell them they should not say so. It will be dangerous for them. Higher and wealthy class will not feel the necessity of religion. The officers among them have bungalows to live in, servants to serve them, they have money, wealth and respect, the men of such sort need not think of religion or to be worried about it.

Religion is necessary for the poor. Religion is necessary for the Depressed people. The poor man survives on hope. The root of life lies in hope. What will happen to the life if the hope is lost? Religion makes hopeful, and gives a message to the depressed and the poor—do not be afraid, life will be hopeful, it will be! Therefore, the poor and the depressed mankind clings to the religion.

When the Christian religion entered Europe, the condition of Rome and neighbouring countries was very distressful. People could not get enough food. That time hotch potch (Khichadi) was distributed among the poor people. Who became the followers of the Christ? Poor and Depressed people. The poor and lower class people of Europe became Christian. Gibbon had said that Christianity is the religion of beggars. Gibbon is not alive to give the answer to how Christian religion became the religion of all in Europe, otherwise he would have had to answer this.

Some people will say that this Buddhism is the religion of Maharas and Mangas. The Brahmin people used to call Lord Gautam as 'Bho Gautam' means 'Are Gautam'. In this way the Brahmins used to tease the Lord Buddha. They have to see how many idols of Rama, Krishna and Shankara will be sold out in the foreign countries, if they are put to sale. On the contrary, if the idols of Lord Buddha are kept for sale, not a single idol will be left out (Loud clapping). That is too much in India, go and show something outside, the name known to the world is of the Lord Buddha. Then how the propagation of this religion will be prevented !

We will follow our path, you follow yours. We have found a new path. This is the day of hope. This is the path of elevation and progress. This is not the new path. This path has not been borrowed from any where. This path is from here, it is purely

Indian. The Buddhist religion survived here for 2000 years in India. Truly speaking, we feel regretted why we did not embrace the Buddhism earlier. The principles preached by the Lord Buddha are immortal. But the Lord Buddha did not make such claim. There is a provision for change with the change of time. Such generosity is not found in any religion.

The main reason of destruction of the Buddhist religion is the invasions of Muslims. Muslims destroyed the idols of the Lord Buddha in their invasions. This was the first attack on the Buddhist religion. Because of the fear of their invasions, the Buddhist *Bhikkhus* fled. Some went to Tibet, some went to China and some went elsewhere. To defend the religion laity is essential. There was a Greek King in the North-West Frontier. His name was Milinda. This King always used to debate. He delighted in debates. He used to tell the Hindus, one who is a debator should come forward and debate. He had made many unanswerable.

Once, he thought to debate with the Buddhist people and he asked to fetch any Buddhist debator. So the Buddhist people requested Nagsena that he should represent the Buddhists in that debate. Nagsena was learned. Earlier he was Brahmin. What debate took place between Nagsena and Milinda is known to the world through a book. The name of that book is 'Milinda Panha'. Milinda asked a question, 'Why does the religion decline?' Nagsena answered and gave three reasons for it.

The first reason is that a particular religion itself is immature. The basic principles of that religion have no depth. It becomes a temporal religion and such religion survives only for short period.

The second reason is that, if there are no learned preachers in that religion, then the religion declines. Learned persons should preach the philosophy of the religion. If the preachers of the religion are not prepared to hold debate with the opponents, then the religion declines.

And the third reason is that, the religion and the religious principles are only for learned persons. For common people there are temples and shrines. They go there and worship supernatural power.

While embracing Buddhism we should keep in mind these reasons. No one can say that the principles of Buddhism are temporal. Today, the whole world respects all the Principles of Buddhism even after 2500 years. There are 2000 Buddhist Institutions in America. At the expense of 3 Lac rupees, a Buddhist temple has been built in England. In Germany also, there are 3 to 4 thousand Buddhist Institutions. Buddha's principles are immortal. Nevertheless the Buddha has not claimed that this is the religion of God. The Buddha said that his father was a common man ; his mother was a common woman. If you feel, accept this religion. If this religion appeals to your reason, then accept it. Such generosity has not been allowed in any other religion.

What is the original foundation of Buddhism ? There is tremendous difference between the Buddha's religion and other religions. It is not possible to have changes in other religions because those religions relate man with God. Other religions preach that God has created the Nature. God has created all-sky, air, moon, sun etc. God has left nothing for us to do, so we must worship God. According to the Christian religion, after death, there is a Day of Judgement, and all depends on that Judgement. There is no place for God and Soul in the Buddha religion. Lord Buddha said there is sorrow all over the world, 90% people are suffering from sorrow. To emancipate those depressed and poor people from sorrow is the principal task of the Buddha's religion. What else did Karl Marx tell different from Lord Buddha's saying? Lord Buddha did not tell anything in a zigzag way.

Brothers, I have told you whatever, I wanted to say. In all respects this religion is perfect. It has no stigma at all. The principles of Hinduism are such from which enthusiasm can not be created. From thousands of years till the other day not a single graduate or a learned man was produced from our society. I do not hesitate to say, there was a woman who used to sweep my school ; she was Maratha. She did not touch me. My mother used to tell me to call elder person as *Mama* (uncle). I used to call the postman as *Mama* (Loud laughter). In my childhood I felt thirsty in the school. I told so to my teacher. The teacher called the

peon for my protection and told him to take me to the tap. We went to the tap. The peon opened the tap and I drank the water. Usually at school I did not get water to drink. Later I was offered some service as District Judge. But I did not get stick with that sort of job. I had a problem-who would carry out the mission of my brothers, so I did not get stick in that bondage.

As an individual, nothing in this country is impossible for me (clapping). How the arranged declivity of *Vaishya*, *Kshatriya* and *Brahmin* on your head will be tumbled down and destroyed, is the real question. Hence, it is my duty to give you in all respects the knowledge of this religion. By writing books, I will remove all your doubts and suspicions and will try to lead you to a stage of full knowledge. At least at present, you should have faith in me.

However, your responsibility is great too. Your behaviour should be such that other people will honour and respect you. Do not think that this religion means we have got stuck with a corpse around our neck. As far as the Buddhism is concerned, the land of India is of no account. We must resolve to follow Buddhist religion in the finest way. It should not happen that the Mahar people brought the Buddhism to disgrace, so we must have firm determination. If we accomplish this, then we will thrive ourselves, our nation, and not only that but the whole world also. Because the Buddhist religion only will be the saviour of the world. Unless there is justice, there will be no peace in the world.

This new path is full of responsibilities. The young should keep in mind that we had made some resolutions and expressed some desires. They should not become selfish idlers. We should decide that, at least, we should give 20th part of our income for this purpose. I want to take all of you with me. Initially Tathagat gave *Deeksha* to few individuals and directed them: "Spread this religion". After that Yasha and his forty friends embraced the Buddhism. Yasha belonged to rich family. Lord Buddha said to them, what is this religion like? The religion is "*Bahujan hitay bahujan sukhay, Lokanucampay, Dhamma adi Kalyanam, Madhya Kalyanama*

Paryavasana Kalayanam.” Tathagata decided the path of preaching His religion according to the conditions of that time. Now we must have to make the mechanism. After this ceremony each one should give *deeksha* to each one. I proclaim that every Buddhist person has the right to give *Deeksha*.¹

Thus, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar concluded his speech under thunderous applause from the Buddhists and invitees.

. tears of joy ran down

“Reverend D. Valisinha, General Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, was specially invited to grace the occasion. His eye-witness account of the conversion ceremony bears ample testimony to the enthusiasm shown by Babasaheb’s followers in embracing Buddhism. About this historical event Rev. D. Valisinha says ;

“ 14th October, 1956 was a memorable day in the history of Modern India. For it was on that day that Dr. Ambedkar with 500,000 of his followers recited *Trisarana* and *Panchasila* and publicly embraced Buddhism. The site of the great event was a fourteen acre vacant land in the city of Nagpur, Maharashtra Pradesh, where an enormous pandal had been erected for the ceremony. I had the privilege of being invited to it and even today the unprecedented scene of such a mass of humanity repeating word for word the *Trisarana* and *Panchasila* remains vivid in my memory. Never did I see such an enthusiastic gathering in my life. Throughout the previous night and the whole of the morning of the 14th, the sky was rent with cries of “*Bagawan Buddha-ki Jai*” (Victory of Lord Buddha). Large and small batches of men, women and children, and some with babies in their arms, some with Buddhist flags in the hands, came in never ending streams from all parts of the country and poured into the enclosure. Thousands were seen squatting on the roadside

¹ : Marathi Speech published in the Prabuddha Bharat Special number, Ambedkar Deeksha : 27th October 1956. Translated into English by the Editors.

waiting to take their places in the enclosure. We went round the city and wherever we went we saw procession after procession wending its way to the place of meeting when we reached the place with difficulty that the large force of volunteers made a way for our car to reach the back of the platform. As I looked round from the platform, I saw nothing but a sea of human heads and the scene was indeed heart lifting. This was unique, for never in the living memory had such a mass conversion taken place. Dr. Ambedkar was not in the best of health and yet he spoke for over an hour giving his reasons for embracing Buddhism. He himself gave the five precepts to the assembled mass and they repeated the words in a chorus and the sound must have travelled a long distance. When I presented an image of Lord Buddha and garlanded Dr. Ambedkar on behalf of the Maha Bodhi Society which found in him the fulfillment of its 70 years effort, tears of joy ran down my cheeks.”¹

Dr. Ambedkar's Conversion is towards re-establishment of Buddha Sasan in India

“Likewise Justice U Chan Htoon, Supreme Court, Union of Burma, Rangoon, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for his historical conversion ceremony, also stated the efforts regarding publication of ‘Buddha and his Dhamma.’ Letter is as follows :

Supreme Court of the Union of Burma.

Dated 22nd October, 1956.

My dear Dr. Ambedkar,

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on the greatest contribution you have made towards the re-establishment of Buddha Sasan in India. The hearts of all the Buddhists of Burma go out to you for your memorable achievement in this Jayanti

¹: Valisinha, D; “Dr. Ambedkar and His Contribution to Buddhism” in thoughts on Dr. Ambedkar, compiled by Hoti Lal Nim, Siddharth Education and Cultural Society, Agra, 1969, Pp. 34, 95.

As regards the scholarships for students by essay competition, I have been able to get the important members of the Buddha Sasana Council to agree to the idea in principle. So I would like you or Mrs. Ambedkar to send us a detailed scheme to be put up to the Council.

Nine persons, including U Nu, the Chief Justice U Thein Maung, and myself, are coming to join in the Jayanti celebrations at New Delhi on the invitation of the Indian Jayanti Celebrations Committee. I am leaving for Khatmandu, leading a delegation of about 10 persons from Burma, to attend the 4th WFB Conference. My wife will also be accompanying me. We shall proceed from Lumbini to New Delhi. We expect to be in New Delhi on or about the 22nd of this month.

Please convey my best regards to Mrs. Ambedkar and also to other colleagues of yours.

Yours in the Dhamma,
(Signed) U CHAN HTOON,
Judge, Supreme Court,
Union of Burma, Rangoon.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar,
M. A., Ph.D., D.Sc., LL.D., D.Litt.,
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New Delhi, India. " 1

1 : Khairmode, Vol. 12, Pp. 93-94.

BUDDHA OR KARL MARX

“An address by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was arranged on 20th Nov. 1956, just before the conclusion of the world Buddhists Council Conference at Kathmandu. This lecture was delivered in the palace of the King of Nepal. To propagate Buddhism with all its merits in such a country as Nepal, where the Hinduism based on ‘laws of Manu’ was prevailing officially, was a revolutionary incident. In this speech Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stressed the basic angle to look at Buddhism.

Dr. G. P. Malalshekar (Srilanka) President, World Buddhist Council, requested Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to talk on “Non-violence in Buddhism” to which he consented. However, the majority delegates of the conference insisted upon Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to talk on “Buddha or Karl Marx”. Mr. U. Chan Htoon, former President of World Buddhist Council and Hon’ble Judge of the Supreme Court of the Union of Burma alongwith his wife escorted Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to the dais and all the delegates of the conference showed due respect to him,

Mahendra Vir Vikram Sahdeo, the King of Nepal, occupied a specially decorated chair on the dais. Hon. Chandramani Mahasthavir, G. P. Malalsekhar, Hon. Amrutanand Mahasthavir and U. Chan Htoon also occupied the dais. Initially Hon. Chandramani gave Trisaran and Panchasheela to all. Dr. G. P. Malalsekhar introduced and welcomed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar—with a garland and requested him to address the gathering.”¹

Dr. Ambedkar said,

President, Your Reverences and Gentlemen,

I am sorry that, having come to Nepal to attend the Conference, I have not been able to participate in its proceedings in the way in which a delegate ought to participate. But I am sure, most of the delegates are aware that although I am here, I am physically a very ill man, and I am quite unable to bear the stress and strain of the Conference proceedings. It is, therefore, not out of any disrespect for the Conference that I have been usually

¹ : Bhikshu Sumedha, Pp. 126-127.

absent, it is because of my personal condition that I could not do justice to the task of the Conference. It is perhaps because of my absence from the Conference, I was asked by way of compensation to address you this afternoon. I consented to do that, but even here there have been surprises flung on me. I had not enough notice that I was to speak here. And when I was asked what subject I would speak on, I mentioned the subject of, Ahimsa in Buddhism. But I find that a large majority of the people attending this Conference are desirous that I should speak on "Buddhism and Communism," a subject to which I, in a very passing sentence, referred at the first general meeting. I am quite prepared to agree to the suggestion of the change of subject, although, I must say that I am not quite on the spur of the moment prepared to deal with such a large, enormous, and if I may say so, a very massive subject. It is a subject which has had half the world in grips, and I find that it has held also in its grip a large number of the student population even of the Buddhist countries. I look upon the latter aspect of the matter with grave concern. If the younger generation of the Buddhist countries are not able to appreciate that Buddhism supplies a way of life which is better than what is supplied by the Communist way of life, Buddhism is doomed. It cannot last beyond a generation or two. It is, therefore, quite necessary for those who, believe in Buddhism to tackle the younger generation, and to tell them whether Buddhism can be a substitute for Communism. It is then only that Buddhism can hope to survive. We must all remember that today a large majority of the people in Europe and a large majority of the youngsters in Asia look upon Karl Marx as the only prophet who could be worshipped. And they regard, the largest part of the Buddhist *Sangha* as nothing but the yellow peril. That is an indication which the *Bhikkhus* must take up, must understand, to reform themselves in order that they could be compared with Karl Marx ; and Buddhism could compete with it.

Now with this introduction, I propose to give you a few salient points in Buddhism and in Marxism or Communism in order to show you where the similarity of ideals lies and where the differences arise between Buddhism and Marxism. And thirdly, whether the Buddhist way of life of reaching the goal is a lasting one, or whether the Communist way of bringing about the goal is the lasting one. Because there is no use in pursuing a certain path, if that path, is not going to be a lasting path, if it is going to lead you to the jungle, if it is going to lead you to anarchy, there is no use pursuing it. But, if you are assured that the path you are asked to follow is slow, may be devious, may be with long detours, yet if ultimately makes you reach a safe, sound ground so that the ideals you are pursuing are there to help you, to mould your life permanently, it is much better, in my judgment, to follow the slower path, and the devious path rather than to rush up and to take what we call short cuts. Short cuts in life are always dangerous, very dangerous.

Now let me go to the subject. What is the theory of Communism ? What does it start with ? Communism starts with the theory that there is exploitation in the world, that the poor are exploited by the rich because of the property that they hold, and they enslave the masses, that enslavement results in suffering, sorrow, and in poverty. This is the starting point of Karl Marx. He uses the word 'exploitation'. What is the remedy that Karl Marx provides ? The remedy that Karl Marx provides is that in order to prevent poverty and the suffering of one class it is necessary to remove private property. Nobody should possess private property because it is the private owner who appropriates or misappropriates. To use the technical language of Karl Marx, the surplus value which the workers produce, the worker does not get the surplus value which he produces. It is appropriated by the owner. Karl Marx asked the question why should be the owner misappropriate the surplus value which is produced by the efforts of the working man ? His answer is that the only owner is the State. And it is because of this that Marx propounded the theory that there must be the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is the third proposition that Marx

enunciated. That Government must be by the exploited classes and not by the exploiting classes, which is what is meant by dictatorship of the proletariat. These are fundamental propositions in Karl Marx, which have the basis of Communism in Russia. They have undoubtedly been expanded, it has been added too, and so on. But these are the fundamental propositions.

Now let me, for a moment, go to Buddhism and see what the Buddha has to say about the points made out by Karl Marx. As I told you, Karl Marx begins with what is called exploitation of the poor. What does the Buddha say ? How does he begin ? What is the foundation on which he has raised the structure of His religion ? The Buddha, too, 2000 or at any rate 2400 years ago, said exactly the same thing. He said, " There is *Dukkha* in the world." He did not use the word 'exploitation' but He did lay the foundation of His religion on what He called *Dukkha*. There is *Dukkha* in the world. The word *Dukkha* no doubt has been interpreted in various ways. It has been interpreted to mean re-birth, the round of life, that is *Dukkha*. I do not agree with that. I think there are lots of places in the Buddhist literature where the Buddha has used the word *Dukkha* in the sense of poverty. Therefore, so far as the foundation is concerned, there is really no difference at all.

It is unnecessary for the Buddhist people to go to Karl Marx to get the foundation. That foundation is already there, well laid. It is where the Buddha begins his first sermon—the *Dharma Chakra Pravartana Sutta*. Therefore, to those who are attracted by Karl Marx, I say, study the *Dharmachakra Pravartana Sutta* and find out what the Buddha says. And you will find sufficient satisfaction on this question. The Buddha did not lay the foundation of his religion either on God, or on Soul, or anything Supernatural like these. He laid His finger on the fact of life—people are living in suffering. Therefore, so far as Marxism or Communism is concerned, Buddhism has enough of it. And the Buddha has said it 2000 years before Marx was born.

With regard to the question of property, you will again find some very close affinity to the doctrine of the Buddha and the doctrine preached by Karl Marx. Karl Marx said that in order

to prevent exploitation, the State must own the instrument of production, that is, property. Land must belong to the State, industry must belong to the State, so that no private owner might intervene and rob the worker of the profits of his labour. That is what Marxism said.

Now, let us go to the *Sangha*, the Buddhist *Sangh*, and examine the rules of life that the Buddha laid down for the monks. What are the rules that the Buddha laid down? Well, the Buddha said that no monk shall have private property. Ideally speaking, no monk can own property. And although there might be a few lapses here and there, and I have noticed that in some countries the monks own some property, yet in the large majority of the cases the monks have no property at all. In fact, the Buddhist rules for the *Sangha* are far more severe than any rule that the Communists have made in Russia. I take it as a mute subject, nobody has yet discussed it and come to any conclusion.

What object did the Buddha have in forming the *Sangha*? Why did he do it? Going back a little into the history, when the Buddha was engaged in propagating this religion, those we today call the "*Parivrajakas*" were existing there long before the Buddha was there. The word "*Parivrajaka*" means a displaced person, a person who has lost his home. Probably during the Aryan period the different tribes of the Aryans were warring against one another as all tribal people do. Some broken tribes left, lost their moorings and they were wandering about. And it is those wanderers that were called *Parivrajakas*. The great service that the Buddha did to these *Parivrajakas* was to organise them into a body, to give them rules of life - those that are contained in the '*Vinayapitika*'. In the rules, the Bhikkhu is not allowed to have property. The Bhikkhu is allowed to have only seven things - a razer, a lota for getting water, a *Bhikshyapatra* and three *Chivaras*, and the needle for sewing things. Well, I want to know if the essence of Communism is to deny the private property, can there be any greater and more severe rule so regards private property than is found in the '*Vinayapitika*'? I do not find one. Therefore, if any people or

any youngsters are attracted by the rule contained in the Communist system of rules that there shall be no private property, they can find it here. The only question is, to what extent can this rule of denial of private property be applied to society as a whole? That is a matter of expediency, time, circumstances, development of human society. But, so far as theory is concerned whether there is anything wrong in abolishing private property, Buddhism will not stand in the way of anybody who wants to do it; because it has already made this concession in the organisation of the Buddhist *Sangha*.

Now, we come to another aspect of the matter, and that aspect is - what is the ways and means which Karl Marx or the Communists wish to adopt in order to bring about Communism? This is the important question. The means that the Communists wish to adopt in order to bring about Communism, by which I mean the recognition of *Dukkha*, and abolition of property, is violence and killing of the opposed. There lies the fundamental difference between the Buddha and Karl Marx. The Buddha's means of persuading people to adopt the principles is by persuasion, by moral teaching, by love. He wants to conquer the opponent by inculcating in him the doctrine that love and not power can conquer anything. That is where the fundamental difference lies - that the Buddha would not allow violence, and the Communists do. No doubt the Communists get quick results; because when you adopt the means of annihilating men, they do not remain to oppose you.

You go on with your ideology, you go on with your ways of doing things. The Buddha's way, as I said, is a long way, perhaps some people may say, a tedious way. But I have no doubt about it that it is the surest way.

There are two or three questions which I have always asked my communist friends to answer and which, I must frankly say, they have not been able to answer. They establish by means of violence what they call the dictatorship of the proletariat. They deprive all people who have property, of their political rights. They cannot have representation in the legislature. They cannot have right to vote, they must remain what they call second grade subjects of the State, the ruled, not

sharing authority or power. When I asked them, "Do you agree that dictatorship is a good method of governing people" ? They say, "No, we don't, we don't like dictatorship ". Then we say, "How do you allow it?" But they say, " This is an interim period in which dictatorship must be there." You proceed further and ask them, "What is the duration of this interim period? How long? Twenty years ? Forty years ? Fifty years ?" No answer. They only repeat that the proletarian dictatorship will vanish, somehow automatically.

Very well, let us take the thing as it is that dictatorship will vanish. Well, I ask a question, "What will happen when dictatorship disappears ? What will take its place ? Will men not need Government of some sort ? " They have no answer.

Then we go back to the Buddha and ask this question in relation to his Dhamma. What does he say ? The greatest thing that the Buddha has done is to tell the world that the world cannot be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of the man, and the mind of the world. If the mind is changed, if the mind accepts the Communist system and loves it loyally and carries it out, it is a permanent thing, it does not require a soldier or a police officer to keep a man in order. Why ? The answer is : The Buddha has energized your conscience itself that is acting as a sentinel in order to keep you on your path. There is no trouble when the mind is converted the thing is permanent.

The Communist system is based on force. Supposing tomorrow the dictatorship in Russia fails, and we see signs of its failure, what would happen ? I really like to know what would happen to the Communist system. As I see it, there would be bloody warfare among the Russian people for appropriating the property of the State. That would be the consequence of it. Why ? Because they have not accepted the Communist system voluntarily. They are obeying it because they are afraid of being hanged. Such a system can take no root, and therefore in my judgment unless the Communist are able to answer these questions, what would happen to their system ? When force disappears, there is no use pursuing it. Because, if the mind is not converted, force will always be necessary, and this is what

I want to say in conclusion that one of the greatest things I find in Buddhism is that its system is a democratic system. The Buddha told the Vajjis when the Prime Minister of Ajata Satru went to tell the Buddha, that Ajata Satru wanted to conquer the Vajjis. He said, the King won't be able to do it as long as the Vajjis follow their ways of their age-old system. The Buddha for unknown reasons did not explain in plain terms what he meant. But there is no doubt about it that what he was referring to was the democratic and the republican form of government, which the Vajjis had. He said : so long as the Vajjis were following their system, they would be unconquered. The Buddha, of course, was a great democrat.

Therefore, I say, and may I say so if the President will allow me, I have been a student of politics; I have been a student of economics, I was a professor of Economics, and I have spent a great deal of time in studying Karl Marx, Communism and all that, and I have also spent good deal of time in studying the Buddha's Dhamma. After comparing the two I came to the conclusion that Buddha's advice with regard to the great problem of the world, namely, that there is *Dukkha*, that *Dukkha* must be removed, that the Buddha's method was the safest and the soundest.

Thus, do I advice the younger generation of the Buddhist countries to pay more attention to the actual teachings of the Buddha. If I may say so in conclusion if any peril arises to the Dhamma, in a Buddhist country the blame shall have to be cast upon the *Bhikkhus*, because I personally think that they are not wholly discharging the duty which devolves on them. Where is the preaching? The *Bhikkhu* is living in his cloister taking his meal, one meal no doubt and sitting quietly : probably he is reading, and most probably I find them sleeping, and in the evening having a little music. That is not the way of propagating religion.

My friends, I want to tell you, I do not want to criticise anybody; but religion, if it is to be a moral force for the regeneration of society, you must constantly din it into the ears of the people. How many years has a child to spend in School?

You do not send the child to school on a day and then withdraw the child home and expect the child to grow into learning, to get education. The child has to go to School every day, sit there for five hours and study constantly. It is then, and then alone that the child gets somewhat saturated with what is called knowledge and what is called learning. Here the monastery is not a state. The *Bhikkhus* do not call the people to the monasteries on any single day and deliver sermon to them on some subject or moral education. I have never seen it.

I went to Ceylon and I told some people that was particularly anxious to see how the *Bhikkhus* preach. They told me that they have got '*Bana*', *Bana* some word they use which, I subsequently learnt meant, '*Vanaka*'. They took me at 11 O' clock to one place, to small little square thing as big as this, a table and I sat on the ground. A *Bhikkhu* was brought in. Several men and women brought water and washed his feet and he came up and sat there. He had a fan with him, you see, Gods only know what he said, of course, he must have preached in Singhalese. It was not more than two minutes, and after two minutes he departed.

You go to Christian Church, what happens ? Every week people assemble there. They worship, and some priest delivers a sermon on some subject from the Bible in order to remind the people what Jesus told them that they should do. You will be probably surprised, to know that 90 per cent of Christianity is copied from Buddhism both in substance and in form. You go to Rome, see the main Church and you will be reminded of the big temple which is known as '*Viswa Karma*' at Berut.

Vishabigne, who wrote a book on Buddhism, and was a missionary in China, had expressed his great surprise as to how this similarity occurs between Buddhism and Christianity. So far as the outlook, he dared not say that the Buddhist copied Christian, but he would not admit that the Christians copied Buddhism. There is so much of it, I think time has turned and we must now copy some of the ways of the Christians in order to propagate our religion among the Buddhist people. They must be made aware, every day and all time, that the Buddha's Dhamma is there, standing by them like a policeman to guard lest they

should go the wrong way. Without that this religion will remain probably in a very decadent state. Even now that I find it even in the Buddhist countries, its condition is very decadent. But its influence is there. No doubt about it.

I wanted to tell you one very interesting epilogue which I saw in Burma. I went to Burma. I was called for the Conference and they took me to show how they were going to reconstruct the villages. I was very happy. I went with them and the Committee had planned to reform the village. Their streets as usual were crooked, bent here and there, nothing systematic. So the Committee put down iron pillars and lined ropes that this street must go this way. In good many cases I found that the lines drawn by the Committee went across a piece of land which was owned by a private individual. When I went and saw and I asked them, "How are they going to manage? Have you got money to pay for the property that you are going to take?" They said, "Nobody wants money." Everybody said, "If you want it, take it." Why is this? Why in my country there would have been bloodshed if you take a little piece of land from somebody without giving him compensation. But there it is, why? Why were the Burmese so free with their property? Why did they not care for it? It is because the Buddha has taught "*Sarvam Anityam*." Everything you see, is impermanent. Why fight for impermanent things? It is all right if you want the land, take it.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I do not think I can continue any further, nor is it necessary for me to do that.

I just wanted to give you a point of view from which to look at. Do not be allured by Communist successes. I am quite confident that if we all become one tenth as enlightened as the Buddha was, we can bring about the same result by the methods of love, of justice, and good will. Thank you very much."¹

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¹ : Report of the 4th Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, Kathamandu, Nepal.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX—I

Gandhiji's articles on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's proclamation of Conversion

In an article published in the *Harijan*, dated October 26, 1935 under the title "On Its Last Legs" Bapuji observed :

"Some critics have not hesitated to observe that it was preposterous for me to claim, in answer to Dr. Ambedkar's threat to accept some other faith rather than die a Hindu, that Untouchability was on its last legs in spite of Kavitha. Indeed, Kavitha itself supports my claim. Kavitha had gone on ever since its birth living peacefully till an over-zealous worker, not knowing his own limitations, had put up Kavitha *Harijans* to dare to send their children to local school, though he knew that there was opposition from some Kavitha *Savarnas*. He had hoped, as had happened elsewhere, that *Harijans* had successfully asserted their right to send their children to public schools. But Kavitha *Savarnas* showed that they had not recognised the time spirit.

"Only a few years ago the Kavitha incident would have attracted no notice. There were very few reformers then. The few were to be found mostly in towns and cities. Now, thank God, their number is increasing and presently every village will have its quota. But a few years ago *Harijans* could not be induced to resist Untouchability on any account whatsoever. It was part of their faith as it was of *Savarnas'* faith. These columns contain sufficient evidence of the weekly progress made by the campaign against Untouchability. Phenomenal though the progress has been, Kavitha and the like show that it has not yet affected the majority of *Savarnas* in many places. The fact is a warning to the reformers and the *Harijans* that much has yet to be done before the hard hearts of *Savarnas* are melted.

"Let it be further observed that it was *Savarna* reformers who advertised the Kavitha tragedy and gave it an all-India importance. I have agitated *Savarna* conscience more than it was angered the *Harijans*. I have to note with shame and

sorrow that even Kavitha *Harijans* no longer want to agitate for their rights. They have meekly submitted to the *Savarna* impudence. In spite of all the help offered to them, they would not leave Kavitha. It is easy enough for the few that are there to earn their bread by honourable toil elsewhere. The attempt of the reformers to induce them to leave Kavitha under their protection has failed.

“Even if change of faith, not on account of its inherent inadequacy but because of the unreasoning prejudice of many of the followers, were justified, in the present instance it can but defeat the cause intended to be served. Secession of stalwarts like Dr. Ambedkar can but weaken the defences of *Harijans*. We know, as a matter of fact, that Non-Hindu *Harijans*, no matter how eminent they may be, are not able to help Hindu *Harijans*. Indeed, they are a class apart still in their adopted faiths. Such is the hold Untouchability of the Indian type has on the people of India.

“Let not Dr. Ambedkar’s just wrath deject the reformer, let it spur him to greater effort. For whilst it is true that the number of workers against Untouchability has greatly increased, there can be no doubt that the number is yet too small to overtake the prejudice of ages. Nevertheless (with) a movement which has attained the proportions that the Anti-Untouchability campaign has attained and in which the slightest untoward incident can attract world-wide attention, (Untouchability) cannot but be on its last legs. Humanity will not suffer it any longer.”¹

II

In an article published in the *Harijan*, dated March 21, 1936, Bapuji observed :

“Ever since Dr. Ambedkar has thrown the bom-shell in the midst of Hindu society in the shape of threatened conversion, frantic efforts have been made to wean him from the proposed step. Dr. Ambedkar’s threat has had its repercussions on

¹ : Government of India, The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, Volume LXII, Pp. 64-65. Reprinted, Busi Dr. Pp. 299-301.

Harijans too, who are at all literate and are able to read newspapers. They have begun to approach Hindu institutions or reformers with a demand for posts, scholarships or the like, accompanying it with the statement that the writer might, in the event of refusal, be obliged to change to another faith, and having been offered on behalf of the representatives of that faith.

“ Without a doubt these threats are a portent and a matter of grave concern to those who care at all for the religion of their forefathers. But it will not be served by coming to terms with those who have lost faith in Hinduism or for that matter in any religion. Religion is not a matter of barter. It is a matter for every individual to decide for himself to which faith he will belong. It does not lend itself to purchase in any shape or form. Or if such an expression can be used in connection with things of the spirit, religion can only be purchased with one's own blood. If, therefore, any *Harijan* wants to give up Hinduism, he should be entirely free to do so.

“ There must be searching of heart for the reformer. Has his practice or that of his neighbours caused the detection ? If it has and if it is found to be improper, it must be changed.

“ It is an admitted fact that the conduct of a vast number of Hindus who call themselves *Sanatanists* is such as to cause the greatest inconvenience and irritation to the *Harijans* all over India. The wonder is that many more *Harijans* than already have, have not left Hinduism. It speaks volumes for their loyalty or for the innate virtue of Hinduism that millions of *Harijans* have clung to it in spite of the inhumanities to which in the name of that very faith they have been subjected to.

“ This wonderful loyalty of *Harijans* and their unexampled patience render it imperative for every *Savarna* Hindu to see that *Harijans* receive the same treatment that every other Hindu does. The course before *Savarnas* is, therefore, on the one hand not to interfere with *Harijans* wishing to leave the Hindu fold by trying to keep them within it by the offer of bribes in the shape of finding employment or scholarship and, on the other hand, to insist on full justice being done to *Harijans* in every

walk of life. Indeed reformers should anticipate the *Harijans'* requirements and not wait till they begin to complain. The *Harijan Sevak Sangh* is the biggest institution for the removal of Untouchability. It has widely adopted a most liberal policy of giving scholarships to deserving students. It employs as many *Harijans* as possible. But it is in no sense a bureau for finding jobs for unemployed *Harijans*. Generally speaking, there is no dearth of jobs for *Harijans* who are fit for the jobs for which they offer themselves. The greatest hardship felt by thousands of *Harijans* is want of pure water for drinking and domestic use, denial of access to public schools and other institutions, constant pinpricks in villages and, last but not the least, denial of access to temples of worship. These disabilities are stern realities in the lives of the vast mass of *Harijans*. If they as a mass give up Hinduism, they will do so because of these common disabilities which brand them as lepers of Hindu society. *Hinduism is passing through a fiery ordeal. It will perish not through individual conversions, not even through mass conversions, but will perish because of the sinful denial by the so-called Savarna Hindus of elementary justice to Harijans. Every threat of conversion is, therefore, a warning to the Savarnas that if they do not wake up in time, it may be too late !* (Italics supplied).

“ One word to the impatient and needy *Harijans*. They must not use threats when they approach Hindu institutions or individuals for help. They should rely upon the strength of their case commanding a hearing. The majority of *Harijans* do not know what change of religion can mean. They mutely suffer the continuing degradation to which *Savarnas* in their selfishness have consigned them. They must be the primary care of Hindu reformers whether they complain or do not. Those who are enlightened enough to know and feel the degradation and know also what change of religion means, are either too good Hindus to desert their ancestral faith and deserve every help they need, or being indifferent as to religion may not claim help from *Savarna* Hindus in exchange for their condescending to remain in the Hindu fold. I would, therefore, plead with enlightened *Harijans* for their own sakes not to

seek material betterment under threat of conversion. And whilst reformers must on no account yield to threats, they must ceaselessly strive to secure justice for Harijans at the hands of *Savarna* Hindus.”¹

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¹: Government of India, The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, Volume LXII, P. 281. Reprinted, Busi Dr. Pp. 306-308.

APPENDIX—II

CONSTITUTION OF THE SAMATA SAINIK DAL

Sainik's Oath

I, a member of the Scheduled Caste Community, entering the ranks of the Samata Sainik Dal, do hereby take an Oath and solemnly swear to be an honourable, brave, disciplined and resolute fighter in the glorious cause of the emancipation of my class from all oppression, exploitation and slavery.

I shall ever be ready at the Command of the S. S. D. to go forward for the defence of the just and human rights of the people of my class and community.

Should it be out of weakness, cowardice, or evil design, I violate this oath and betray the interests of my people, I shall be ready to suffer the full measure of punishment at the hands of the Dal.

A Conference of the Samta Sainik Dal was held at Kanpur on 30th January 1944. Mr. B. K. Gaikwad was the President of the Conference. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was present and also addressed the Conference. In this Conference few resolutions were passed. According to resolution No. 6 a Committee to draft the Constitution of Samta Sainik Dal was Constituted under the Presidentship of Mr. B. K. *alias* Dadasaheb Gaikwad. Mr. M. M. Sasalekar, S. B. Jadhao, R. R. Patil, K. N. Walmiki, A. L. Kosare, P. L. Lalingkar were the members of the Committee. (Janata : dated 6th January 1945).

Accordingly Mr. B. K. Gaikwad sent the draft of the Constitution to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for approval on 8th December 1944 (Khairmode, Vol. 9, P. 405.) which Dr. B. R. Ambedkar received on 13th December 1944. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar acknowledged the letter as " I have received your letter and also a copy of the Constitution of the Samta Sainik Dal. " (*ibid*, P. 407.)

Constitution of the Samata Sainik Dal

I Name and Organization :

- (1) The name of the organization shall be 'Samata Sainik Dal' hereafter referred to as the S. S. D.
- (2) The Samata Sainik Dal shall be affiliated to the All India Scheduled Castes Federation. The President of the Federation on the advice of the Executive Council of the Federation shall appoint a nominee of the Federation to supervise the affairs of the Samata Sainik Dal in each town and in each Province and the Samata Sainik Dal in each town and Province shall work under the guidance of a Supervisor, so appointed.

II Aims and Objects :

- (1) The aim of the Samata Sainik Dal is to strive for the removal of all inequality based on race, religion, caste, sex or class and to unite all members of the Scheduled Caste Communities for a struggle to build a society based on the freedom and equality of all.
- (2) **To achieve this aim :**
 1. The Samata Sainik Dal shall unite and organize the Scheduled Caste youths under its banner.
 2. The Samata Sainik Dal shall promote all social, cultural and other activities among the Scheduled Castes particularly among the youth so as to cultivate self respect, self reliance, and a spirit of self sacrifice in their minds.
 3. The Samata Sainik Dal shall co-operate, with all such organizations and movements that help to further its aims and objects.

III Membership :

Any person belonging to the Scheduled Castes above the age of 18 who agrees with the above aims and objects can join the Samata Sainik Dal on payment of yearly subscription of twelve annas.

IV Training :

- (1) Samata Sainik Dal training shall consist of physical, intellectual and military type.
- (2) The Samata Sainik Dal shall organise training camps, Schools, Clubs, Classes, Lectures, Debates, Libraries etc., and such other forms of activities as it may consider expedient from time to time.
- (3) Branches of All India Samata Sainik Dal shall function in all India Provinces and branches shall also be set up, wherever possible in the Indian States.

Each Provincial branch will organize its District Committees and each District Committee in its town will organize Town and Village Committees.

- (4) The General Body of Samata Sainik Dal in a Town or a Village shall select, according to their ranks, a Town or Village Committee of 5 members, one President, two Secretaries and also select delegates from among themselves to the District Conference in the following manner :—

For 1 to 25 members-One Delegate.

For 25 to 50 members-Two Delegates and so on.

- (5) The District Conference shall select a District Committee of 10 members, one President and two Secretaries as also delegates to the Provincial Conference from amongst themselves according to their ranks in the following manner :—

For 5 delegates to the District Conference and one delegate to Provincial Conference.

For District delegates numbering above five and upto ten, two delegates to the Provincial Conference and so on.

- (6) The Provincial Conference shall select according to their ranks a Provincial Committee of 20 members, one President, two Secretaries and also delegates to the All India Conference. The number of such delegates to the All India Conference shall not exceed 5% of the total strength of membership in each Province.

- (7) The All India Conference of Samata Sainik Dal shall select on All India Council consisting of one President, one Vice-President, one General Secretary, two Joint Secretaries and one member from each Province selected by the All India Central Committee,
- (8) All Provincial units affiliated to the All India Samata Sainik Dal shall pay an affiliation fee of Rs. 25 per annum to the All India Samata Sainik Dal as also 5% of their gross annual income.
- (9) An All India Conference of Samata Sainik Dal shall be held at least once in every year.

V Formation :

1. (a) 12 (Twelve Sainiks-One Section.)

A group of twelve Sainiks makes one Section. The elected two leaders of such section will be called section leader First and Second.

2. (b) 24 (2 Sections-One Platoon.)

Two such sections make one Platoon. The leader of a Platoon elected by the section leaders will be called Platoon Leader.

3. (c) 96 (Four Platoons-One Company.)

Four such Platoons will make a Company. The Company Leader elected by the Platoon Leaders will be called a Company Commander.

4. (d) 384 (Four Company Commanders-One Battalion.)

Four such Company Commanders will make a Battalion. The Leader elected by the Company Commanders of the Battalion will be called a Lieutenant.

5. (e) 1152 (Three Battalions-One Regiment)

Three of such Battalions will make a Regiment and the leader elected by the Lieutenants will be called a G. O. C.

6. (f) 2500 All such G. O. Cs, from all districts and provinces will make a division. The Leader elected for this division will be called as All India Commander-In-Chief.

Meeting of the Dal :

- (1) **QUORUM** :—The S. S. Dal shall meet together not less than once in every six months and shall, from time to time, make regulations consistent with this constitution.
- (2) The President shall fix the dates for the six monthly meetings and may whenever he thinks fit and shall upon the written request of not less than one third of the members and for a date within twenty days from the receipt of such request call a special meeting.
- (3) Fifteen clear days notice of a six monthly meeting and ten clear days notice of a special meeting specifying the time and place at which such meeting is to be held and the business to be transacted there and shall be circulated to the members.
- (4) If less than one third of the whole of the members be present at a meeting at any time from the beginning to the end thereof, the presiding authority shall adjourn the meeting to such hour on the following or some other future day as he may reasonably fix and the business which would have been brought before the original meeting and there have been a Quorum there and shall be brought before the adjourned meeting and may be disposed of at such meeting or at any subsequent adjournment thereof whether there be a Quorum present or not.
- (5) Every meeting shall be presided over by the President or he be absent by the Vice-president and if Vice-president is absent by such one of the members present as may be chosen by the meeting to be Chairman for the occasion.
- (6) All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes of the members present, the President, Vice-president or Chairman, as the case may be having a second or casting vote in all cases of equality of votes.

VII Routine Duties :

Monday	...	Moral
Tuesday	...	Games & Physical Drill
Wednesday	...	Military Drill
Thursday	...	Games & Physical Drill
Friday	...	First Aid
Saturday	...	Military Drill
Sunday	...	Political & Social

VIII Discipline :

If any Sainik or Officer of the Dal is found guilty of smoking, drinking or disobedience to lawful orders or any other mischiefs by his superior he will be given warning once in a way. In spite of the warning, if he takes no pain of avoiding such troubles, his uniforms and his rank will be taken back and he will be dismissed from the Dal.

IX Uniform :

The following rules regarding dress must be observed by the Sainiks and Officers of the Dal :

SAINIK Half Pant Khaki
 Half Shirt Khaki
 Folding Cap
 Canvas Brown Shoes or Pathani Socks
 and (Chappals)
 a stick ($4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long)

NON-OFFICER Half Pant Khaki
 Half Shirt Khaki
 Brown Boots
 Woollen Socks Khaki
 Hat-Khaki
 One cane, one whistle and Khaki
 Bandage cloth.

OFFICER

SUPERIOR Everything as above with the addition of
 Bush Coat.

X Funds of the Dal :

- (1) All the funds of the Dal shall be deposited in a Bank or Banks approved both by the Supervisor appointed by the All India Scheduled Castes Federation and the G. O. C. of the Dal and in the name of S. S. D. shall be operated upon by the G. O. C. and the General Secretary of the Dal.
- (2) All the branches of the S. S. Dal shall select any Bank or Banks in their own respective provinces or Districts and shall deposit in such Bank or Banks all the funds in the name of the S. S. Dal and such funds shall be operated upon by any three persons authorised by the General Body in this behalf.

XI Flag :

The flag of the All India Samata Sainik Dal will be four feet in length and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width. The whole ground of the flag will be deep blue and in the top left corner there shall be 11 pointed stars in white colour. Also there shall be a sun in the middle of the flag in white colour. The letter S. C. F. shall be boldly written under the sun in blue colour. In the Bottom right corner of the flag there shall be letters S. S. D. in white colour.

The meaning of the FLAG is liberty, equality & fraternity and to fight to achieve our goal.

APPENDIX—III

“AN OUTSPOKEN UTTERANCEE ”

In presenting a civic address to Dr. Ambedkar last evening, the 22nd September 1944, Madras honoured itself. Dr. Ambedkar is the accredited leader of a great community, which has for centuries been deprived of the rights of ordinary citizenship. By his high attainments his courageous leadership and outstanding qualities he has proved himself to be a leader of worthy of respect by all irrespective of party differences over small matters. It is to be regretted therefore that a civic address to such a person should have been opposed by a political party—the Congress party and that its members should have refrained from attending the function. This attitude however is neither new nor surprising. A party that has always been guided by totalitarian methods and which has not been conspicuous for its appreciation of the decencies of public life and the amenities of public conduct, should not be expected to lose one opportunity to show its hostility to leaders of other schools of political thought. We, however, feel with Dr. Ambedkar that the civic address was all the more eloquent of the regard in which he is held, because it was free from the conventional lines of Civilisation.

In this reply to the address presented, Dr. Ambedkar spoke with refroosting candour and gave expression to views which are shared by the bulk of our countrymen. At a time when scheme of political reforms are being considered, when the goal of independence is being pressed, it is well to have a correct appreciation of the various factors that should be taken into consideration. It is but natural that under such circumstances, the lessons of the past should not be forgotten—particularly the lessons of the immediate past. Referring these lessons, Dr. Ambedkar observed, “ In this country no matter what they did, the Brahmins were the governing community. They came to the surface and nobody else. In each of the seven provinces they had Brahmin Prime Ministers with half the ministry of Brahmins. The elections proved that in this country there was only one community that was destined to be governing class and it came out as the governing class. ” It will interest our readers to note that even when there

was a change in the Ministry, it was always a Brahmin who was chosen as Prime Minister thus establishing the convention that it was only an Amurath that should succeed an Amurath. The setting up of the Congress Parliamentary Board was itself an ingenious way of ensuring that the time honoured governing class should exercise authority and control. Thus in the very choice of Congress Candidates it was not the Provincial Congress Committees that had the final voice but the Chairman of the Parliamentary Board. Nay, the Presidents of the Provincial Committees, even had no say in the matter, but it was left to a Congress member like Mr. Rajgopalachari to take these recommendations and obtain the final approval of the Parliamentary Board. Is it any wonder that under such circumstances, Non-Brahmins with any degree or independence and those who were not likely to prove themselves docile and submissive had no chance of being even nominated as candidates? Would it surprise any of our countrymen that under these circumstances a person like Dr. Ramalinga Reddy who was the leader of the Congress opposition in the previous legislative was not selected and was put into cold storage when hundreds of persons whose fame and name were hidden in the Congress archives suddenly found themselves in the limelight and were chosen as candidates?

Even in the selection of candidates the power was centred in the Parliamentary Boards. Is it any wonder that when it came a choice of Prime Ministers it was entirely left to a handful to decide? Naturally all the Prime Ministers were Brahmins. Mr. Rajgopalachari, Mr. Kher, Pandit Pant, Mr. Bardolai, Pandit Shukla etc. like genusome—all had to be of the chosen race and they in turn saw it that the Ministry was atleast fifty percent pure with members of the governing race. You may extend the franchise as much as you can, you may give adult franchise and you may even give adolescents and even children the franchise, but what will come to the surface will be the governing race. Not only were nearly fifty percent of the ministry Brahmins but practically all the important portfolis with power and patronage must be in their hands and under their control. Thus to take our own presidency into consideration—Finance, Police, Public Services, Revenue, Medicine and Public Health, Industries, Religious

Endowments—in fact everything of importance had to be under their control. Over and above this, even over the few departments which were thrown as crumbs to the ill-qualified Non-Brahmins, Muslims or Depressed Class Ministers, the Prime Minister had to exercise due control and direct and dictate the policy that had to be pursued. The procedure whereby all power was so effectively concentrated in the representatives of a small community was followed in the other six provinces as well and so once more under the guise of a democratic form of government, the wise rule of the successors of the Peshwas was continued. The inevitable result of such policy was the further enslavement of other nationalities and the exercise of uncontrolled power and authority with the help of British Administrators and Governors to put down such elements as may dare to raise their feeble voices of protest. The abuse of the much condemned criminal law—Amendment Act to put down the so called Hindi agitators in this presidency, the installing of Vidya Mandir in the Central Provinces and Bombay furnish eloquent proof of the nature of the democracy that one should expect.

The warning that Dr. Ambedkar has given is, therefore, timely and essential “we ought to ask the question” says, “Whether the governing class in a particular country has a sense of responsibility, so that the government of the country can be entrusted to that country. We have all forgotten the fact that the right to govern must be decided in the light of the sense of responsibility of the governing class. What is the outlook of the governing class? What is its philosophy? What does it believe in?” Answering these questions, Dr. Ambedkar pertinently observes, “If you have governing class which believes in graded inequality if it believes you must not touch another human being, if it believes that a certain class alone is entitled to education and not others, if it believes that one class alone is entitled to property and another class is born to be servile and to die in servility. If a national Government was formed and if it went into the hands of this governing class, do you think that such a national government will be better than the present Government of India?” These doubts are by no means imaginary. They are on the other hand based on the bitter experience of the past and on the black

prospects of the present. It is no use hiding the truth that the governing class has little or no sympathy for the masses. In words of great Dathos, their orators may speak with eloquence of a Burke or a Cobden, but their performance will give the lie direct to their eloquent effusions. Their interest in education is limited to the facilities available for their own community. Their fight for jobs will be most strenuous when the jobs are to benefit their kith and kin. Their plea for self government will be most vigorous, so long as it will help to keep their men in power. If there is no possibility of such a consummation, they will commit a somersault and ask for Section 93 to come into vogue. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee when he urged the British Government to overthrow the present Bengal Ministry and introduce Government under Section 93 was by no means expressing his personal views or wishes. He is by no means the exception. And in framing of the future constitution, the different nationalities have to take these facts into consideration and see to it that the political future of India does not yield to them the Dead Sea fruit of servility and enthrone the governing class once more in authoritarian rule, "Dr. Ambedkar has rendered a great service to the cause of freedom and the future of India by his outspoken utterances and we thank him sincerely for it." ¹

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¹ : The Liberator, dated 23-9-1944 ;
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“ Democracy is quite different from a Republic as well as from Parliamentary Government. The roots of democracy lie not in the form of Government, Parliamentary or otherwise. A democracy is more than a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living. The roots of Democracy are to be searched in the social relationship, in the terms of associated life between the people who form a society.

What does the word ' Society ' connote ? To put it briefly when we speak of ' Society, ' we conceive of it as one by its very nature. The qualities which accompany this unity are praiseworthy community of purpose and desire for welfare, loyalty to public ends and mutuality of sympathy and co-operation.

Are these ideals to be found in Indian Society ? The Indian Society does not consist of individuals. It consists of an innumerable collection of castes which are exclusive in their life and have no common experience to share and have no bond of sympathy. Given this fact it is not necessary to argue the point. The existence of the Caste System is a standing denial of the existence of those ideals of society and therefore of democracy”.—(P. No. 519-520)

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.